

# Dharma Yoga

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## Seated Postures by Sri Dharma Mittra New York Yoga Magazine, June 2007

Sri Yogi Dharma Mittra is the teacher no one seemed to realize until recently the “him” in the giant master Yoga Chart of 908 postures. Actually he had to get rid of about 30 poses so they would fit on the chart. In this article, we will look at few of the seated postures. Usually done after the Surya and Shiva Namaskara, they offer a relief to some of the more active poses, allowing us to draw ourselves to stillness. Always move in a conscious, slow and graceful manner during your yoga practice try to regulate and slow down your breath so that you can start to bring your attention away from the noisy and restless world. May all of you be blessed and remember, ‘Everything is already perfect.’

### **Backstretch**

*(Pachimottanasana)*

We will begin with a pose anyone can do and feel its value immediately. Of course more advance practitioners will be able to go deeper into the pose. Pachima means the west; therefore bringing you a stretch to the complete posterior side of the body. While stretching the back, the entire spine and discs get elongated and opened. The body being in a horizontal position brings a massage for the heart, which is now below the spine. The backstretch also contracts and strengthens the abdominal muscles.

It will loosen up the pelvic region and bring fresh blood into it, which is good for impotency and celibacy. You can either start lying on your back with your legs extended alongside each other and arms by your sides, or in a sitting position with the legs straight ahead. From the supine position, take a slow long deep inhalation while raising your arms overhead; now slowly exhale as you raise your arms and inner body into a sitting position, and continuing to exhale, bend forward to catch the big toes, or the heels (for more advanced students). Lengthen your spine out from your pelvis as you try to rest your chest on or near the thighs. If you are not too flexible, bend your knees as needed, and place your chest against the thighs, holding your ankles. Maintaining this easier version for tighter students will prevent any back injury. Breathe normally in this position and concentrate on the base of the spine or the entire spine. Best to hold the pose for 10 breaths. To come out reverse coming up, as you exhale slowly and gracefully roll down your spine and resume the Supine position. Relax for 5 breaths and you then may repeat the pose 3 times.



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The regular practice of this pose also stretches the hamstring muscle, pits of the knees, strengthens the nerves and muscles of the lower back, improves the power of the digestive track, and balances the negative and positive currents in the spine.

## **Half or Full Spinal Twist** *(Ardha Matsyendrasana)*

This pose is named after Matsyendra, a fish who became divine after listening in stillness to Lord Shiva's teachings on Yoga and then began to spread the knowledge. It is a wonderful posture to eliminate pressure on the discs between each vertebra, to exercise and strengthen the nerves along the spine and neck region, and the muscles of the back. Ligaments attached to the vertebrae are stretched and fresh blood brought to them. In addition, all twisting postures are a tonic for the organs of digestion, bringing a fresh supply of blood to the abdomen region. They stimulate peristaltic action, and help to relieve constipation, and improve bowel movements.

Start sitting with both legs stretched forward. Keeping the left leg straight, bend the right leg at the knee and drawing it to the chest, place the sole of the foot on the left side of the other knee. Bring your left arm in front of, and across the right thigh, and take hold of the right ankle with the left hand, keeping the left arm on the right side of the leg. Take a deep breath in, and with a slow exhalation begin to twist the trunk of the body as far to the right as possible. Hold the posture for a count of six breaths and think of your right shoulder continually rotating turning back with your chin remaining over the shoulder. Slowly exhale as you unwind and release the pose. Stretch both legs out in front of you and then repeat twisting to your left side. Release slowly as you lie flat and relax. You may repeat this pose to each side again.

- The regular practice of this pose increases breathing capacity and balances positive and negative forces or influences in the body. This balance represents the goal of Hatha Yoga itself.
- Nerve Roots of the spine and the entire sympathetic nervous system is toned.
- The manipura chakra at the naval region is awakened.

## **The Forward Split** *(Hanumanasana)*

This posture is one the most devotional in the entire Hatha system and named for the Monkey Saint Hanuman, the friend and devoted servant of Rama, and a symbol of pure devotion and humility. With his strength and agility, he leap across the sea to the Himalayas to get the life giving herb, sanjavani, to save the life of Laksmana. When your hands are placed in prayer position in front of your heart, this asana



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represents his grand savior leap. This pose works the lower body, toning and stretching the pelvic muscles, and the tissues, which connect the reproductive organs to the thighs. When done with full concentration it relaxes the entire body.

Begin, on your left knee, with your right leg in a lunge in front. Now slowly slide the right foot and leg forward as the left leg straightens in the back. Lower the pelvis and torso gradually closer to the floor. Practice stretching the legs this way until the muscles become elastic enough to bring the pelvis completely on the floor. If any strain is felt release from the pose. Gradual and regular practice will bring beneficial results. Remain in the pose for one to three minutes with normal steady breathing. Concentrate on the breath. You may also either bring the hands to the heart, or above your head, as you stretch up with the palms together or maintain your balance. To break the pose, come to standing, repeat second side. May do 2 times on each side and then lie down on your back a relax completely for a few breaths

- Regular practice of this pose will bring one excellent blood quality, along with wonderful digestive health
- Relieves sciatica and brings youthful suppleness to the hips, pelvis and legs.

## **Lotus Pose** (Padmasana)

This is the reason for practicing all the other poses, or in other words it is the posture for meditation and breath control. It is in this pose, through pranayama, and the practice of the bandhas, the latent energy, or Kundalini stored at the base of the spine is awakened and moved upwards along the 7 chakras. Padma translates to Lotus, as a pristine lotus floats even on dirty water. This posture brings mental and physical balance, and soothes the nervous system. It keeps the mind calm, alert and attentive. It elevates the student from ordinary consciousness into the superconscious state. It is good for stiff hips, knees and ankles. The spine, back muscles and abdominal organs are strengthened

To begin, sit on the floor with legs extended outward. Place the right foot on the left thigh near the hip joint (always bring right foot in first), and the sole of the left foot on the right thigh near the hip joint. Now elongate the spine upwards as much as possible thru the nape of your neck. Relax your jaw, bring your chin down a bit, and keep all facial muscles relaxed. Maintain the straightness of the spine to the best of your capacity. With the back of the hands resting near your knees touch the thumb and forefinger tips, lower your eyelids, and concentrate at the space between the eyebrows, the third eye region.



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You may follow your breath as a means of concentration, inhaling slowly, from the center of the chest. You will begin to feel very calm. To break the pose, release the left foot, then the right (you may use the hands if necessary) and massage the knees. You may hold this posture as long as is comfortable. Practice in small stages until it becomes more comfortable.

- The regular practice of this pose will elevate your consciousness and bring equilibrium to all the bodies and systems.
- Regular practice will allow you to conquer cravings and desires
- This posture also increases appetite and quickens the awakening of the Kundalini energy at base of spine

Sri Yogi Dharma Mittra, Teaches daily at his school Dharma Mittra Yoga in Gramercy Park 2973<sup>rd</sup> Ave @ 23 St, Psychic Development and Meditation classes are held every Wednesday & Friday evening at 7:30pm (\$13). Dharma, known as the “Rock of Yoga” and the “Teacher’s Teacher” regularly conducts Dharma Mittra Yoga Life of a Yogi Teacher Certification programs for 200 & 500 Hours along with his excellent staff of Disciples. See his Master Yoga Chart of 908 Postures, Book 608 Yoga Poses, DVD’s Maha Sadhana Level I & II, CD’s and other spiritual items on our website [www/dharmayogacenter.com](http://www/dharmayogacenter.com)

Free Classes held regularly on Mondays & 4:30pm and Wednesdays 10am for First time students.

Free Kirtans & Hanuman Chalisas held regularly Fridays @8:30-10pm.

