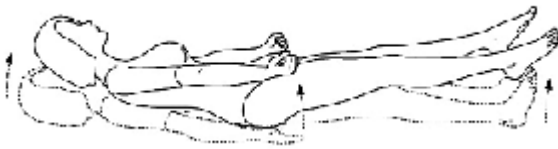


Shavasana Key to Health and Bliss

Shavasana is the King of *Asanas*. Physical and mental relaxation achieved by Shavasana has no equal. During Shavasana slow rhythmic alpha activity appears in the frontal lobe of the brain, and various chemical changes occurring in the body promote healing by increasing the immune status of the individual.

The technique of Shavasana relies on the premise that for optimum relaxation of muscles of the body, prior stretching of muscles is necessary. The stretching must be just enough to create a pleasant sensation. The awareness of an individual doing this exercise must be focused on the process of stretching and relaxation. In Shavasana, progressive deep relaxation is achieved by various stretching and relaxation exercises of the body and keeping the awareness on the process. Normally to practice Shavasana one lies down flat on his back. However, Shavasana can be practiced even in a sitting posture. Practice of Shavasana begins with bringing one's awareness onto one's body. Normally our mind has a tendency to wander. Bringing the awareness to the body and keeping it there is the vital step. And if the mind wanders, without undue force gently bring it back to the body.

For Quick Shavasana, a practitioner lies flat on his back in a relaxed position. Having brought his awareness to his body and gently keeping it there, he contracts the muscles of the whole body, raising his head a little off the ground and his arms and the lower trunk with both the legs also lifted a little off the ground. He experiences the stretch in all the muscles for a few seconds and then relaxes them bringing the body back to position and experiences the relaxation in the whole body.



In this relaxed posture, forgetting the body, the practitioner focuses his awareness on the natural process of breathing. Without making any effort to change breathing, he becomes a witness to every single breath that goes in through the nose during inhalation and every single breath that comes out during exhalation. This way he becomes one with his breath. He remains in this blissful state for two or three minutes. Then he takes in a deep breath and exhales slowly. He gently opens his eyes, makes some movement of his hands and feet, turns on his side and assumes a sitting position. The whole exercise would take less than five minutes but it refreshes the practitioner for a long time. It is easy to see that a complaint of lack of time to do this simple *Asana* is irrelevant. Those who have complaint of back pain may not contract the muscles of the whole body. They may contract only the muscles of the hands and lower trunk, raising only the hands and the legs off the ground, keeping the upper trunk and head in a resting flat position.

Our physical body, mind and intellect are outer layers enveloping our Inner Self. Our identification with the impermanent outer components of our being causes all our sorrows. Shavasana helps us to reach our innermost Supreme Self and gain enduring peace and happiness. "We are both actors and spectators in the great drama of existence," says physicist Niels Bohr.

The Soul is 'two-in one,' the actor "I" and the spectator I. The actor "I" goes through one's roles in life. The spectator I is the *Atman*, the sheer witness - *sakshi cheta kevalo nirgunascha*.

Normally we lump the actor and spectator together. Education does not prepare us to

differentiate the two. The essence of spiritualism is the separation of the actor “I” and the spectator I and the resultant freedom from emotional involvement in the roles of the former. That is the gist of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Gita, the Yoga Sutras and all. Practicing Shavasana is training oneself to identify oneself with the spectator and keep aloof from the actor. At night review the performance of actor “I” for the day, pull it up for shortcomings and praise it for good performance, keeping nothing for your true spectator self and be unburdened to sleep with a peaceful mind.

Shavasana helps you develop spiritually and thereby empowers you not only to meet the challenges of daily existence with inner detachment but also to live a rewarding and fulfilling life.

Detailed technique of Shavasana can be downloaded from the website:

www.universalhealing.org

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