

Advanced Yoga Practices

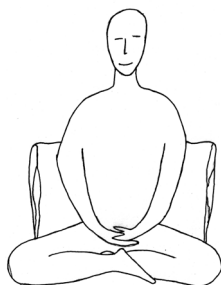
—

Easy Lessons for Ecstatic Living

The Original Internet Lessons with Additions by the Author

Yogani

your legs get uncomfortable during meditation it is okay to extend one or both of them out on the bed as needed and continue meditating. Or you can switch the inside leg from one to the other from time to time, and continue that way. Do whatever it takes to keep comfortable during meditation, while gently favoring the cross-legged way of sitting at the same time. Back support is recommended for all but the most hearty. The hands can be folded in the lap or placed on the thighs, knees, or wherever they are most comfortable. In time, sitting cross-legged will become second nature, and you will be able to meditate easily and not even notice how you are sitting.



Cross-legged sitting with back support

If there is a disability or other limiting factor you can't overcome, and sitting cross-legged is not going to be possible for you, it is okay. You can still meditate and derive all the benefits. Nothing is lost. As we take on new advanced yoga practices down the road, there are ways we can get around the lack of crossed legs. Crossed legs are preferable, but not mandatory.

Obviously, when we find ourselves in situations where we will be meditating in planes, offices, waiting rooms, etc., we just sit normally on our chair without any special position for the legs. But when we are meditating at home, we always favor (with comfort) the cross-legged way of sitting just described. It is an important preparation that will form the foundation for a dramatic stage of our spiritual transformation as we add additional advanced yoga practices.

The guru is in you.

Note: This lesson is preparation for an important practice called “siddhasana,” which will be introduced further on.



1a. Warm-up, head to heart



1b. Warm-up, arms to heart



1c. Warm-up, legs to heart



2a. Knees to chest



2b. Roll, right then left



3. Kneeling seat



4a. Sitting, head to one knee



b. Sitting, head to both knees



5. Shoulder stand



6. Plow



7. Seal of yoga



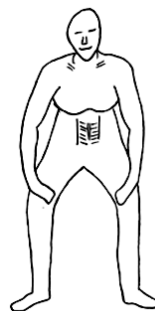
8. Cobra



9. Locust



10. Spinal twist



11. Abdominal lift



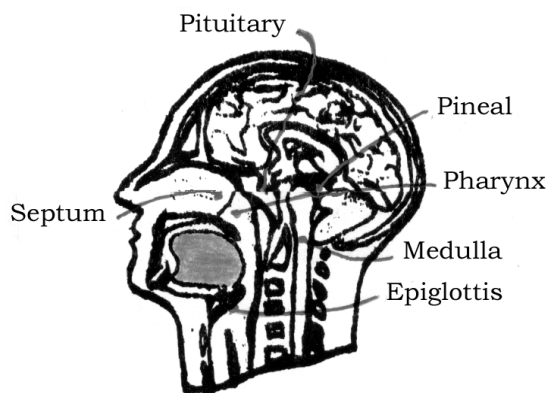
12. Standing back stretch



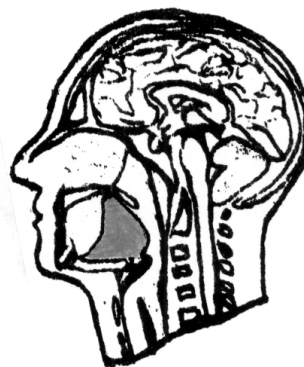
13. Standing toe touch



14. Corpse pose



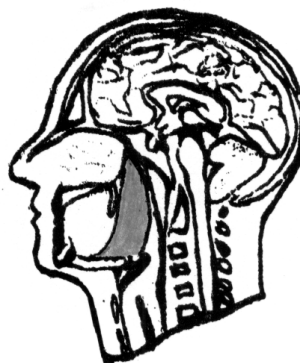
Pre-Kechari



Stage 1



Stage 2



Stage 3



Stage 4 – left nostril



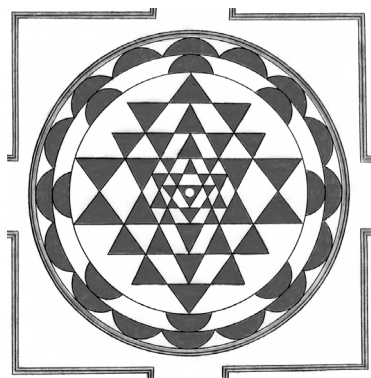
Stage 5

Lesson T25* – Sri Vidya – The Fruition of Tantra

As was mentioned in the first lesson here, tantra has often been condemned as degenerate in the East and misunderstood (with great enthusiasm) as a sexual cult in the West. What we find as we travel our serious path of yoga is that tantra includes everything we are doing, and probably a lot we are not doing. Tantra is the most all-encompassing approach to yoga, leaving no stones unturned. But where does it all lead? What is the end of tantra? What is its fruition? In the main lessons, and here in the tantra lessons also, we have discussed the union of our inner polarities as being the end of all our yoga practice. There are many ways to describe this process – as many ways as there are spiritual traditions in the world. No matter how described, it is the same process of human spiritual transformation. On the level of our personal experience in the body it is the union of our blissful inner silence cultivated mainly in deep meditation, with our whole body ecstasy cultivated in spinal breathing and other pranayamas, mudras, bandhas and tantric sexual methods. On the level of tantric mythological metaphors it is the union of Shiva and Shakti, which correspond to the direct experiences of silence and ecstasy just mentioned.

The rise of Shiva, Shakti and their final union everywhere within us make up the three stages of enlightenment – First, 24/7 inner silence. Second, 24/7 whole body ecstasy. And third, 24/7 ecstatic bliss, the joining of the divine polarities of silence and ecstasy, yielding an endless outpouring of divine love, which is unity. (24/7 means 24 hours per day, 7 days per week) If you imagine the rise of a conscious ecstatic resonance vibrating in every atom of your body, occurring between every nucleus and its surrounding electrons, you will have an idea of the depth of the transformation. It is an unending cosmic orgasm within every cell and atom in us.

This fruition of divine transformation is recognized in a scriptural and experiential branch of tantra known as, “Sri Vidya,” which means “glorious knowledge.” It is the knowledge of ecstatic bliss, expressed with mathematical precision. If this seems like a paradox, then it is surely divine, for divine truth is a paradox. If truth is experienced as wildly ecstatic, it will be heading toward spiritual precision. If it is conceived to be mathematically exact, then it will soon to be undoing us in ecstatic reverie. Nowhere is this better expressed than in Sri Vidya’s sacred diagram called *Sri Yantra*, sometimes called *Sri Chakra*. Here is one in black and white:



Sri Yantra