



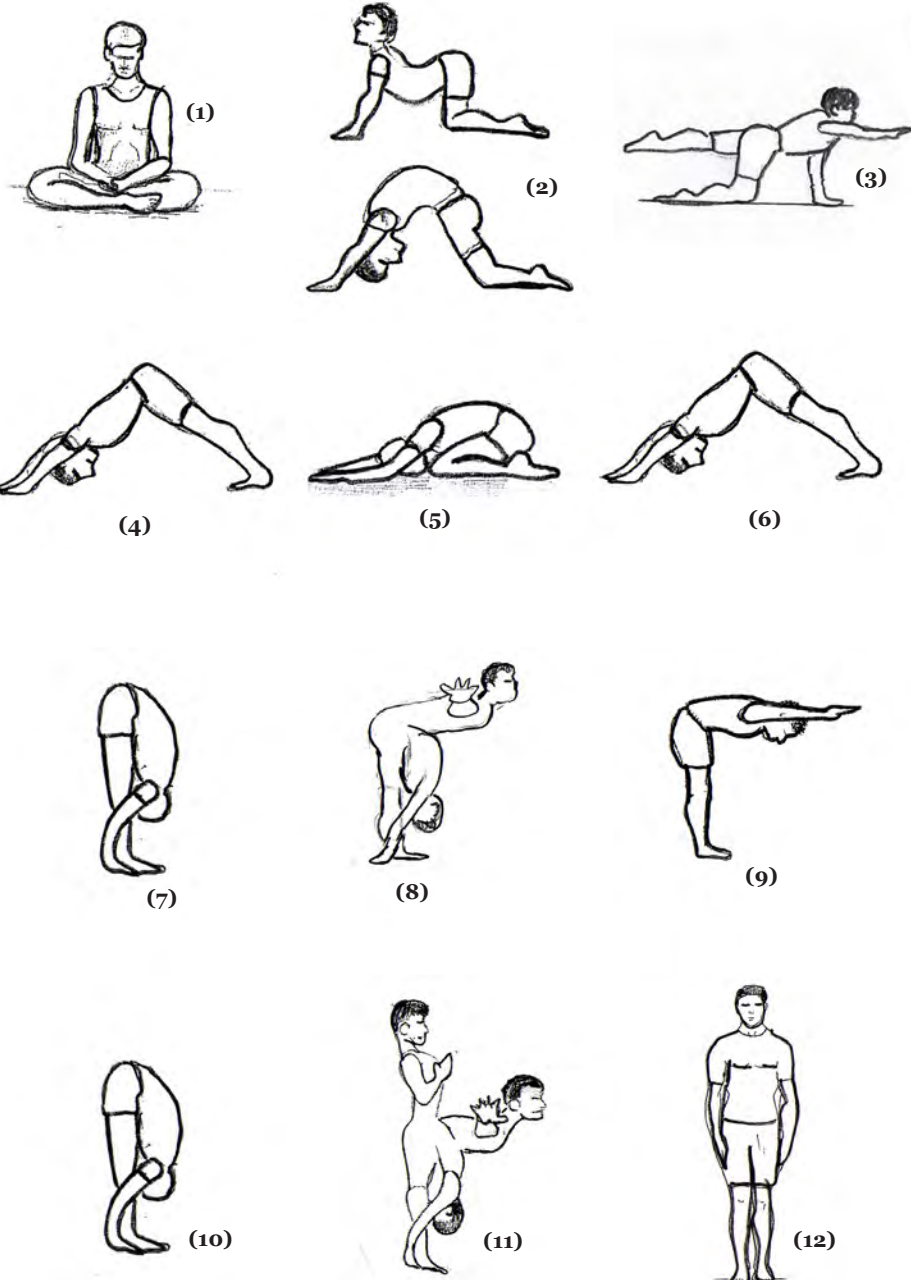
PRISON YOGA PROJECT

A PATH FOR HEALING AND RECOVERY

JAMES FOX

Basic Practice

This is a well-structured and solid introduction to practicing many of the fundamental asanas of yoga. It is intended to provide a beginning and complete practice for anyone who is in reasonably good physical condition. It is recommended to do the Basic Practice regularly for at least six months before moving onto the Intermediate Practice.



Centering & Opening

(1) Easy Pose (*Sukhasana*) – sit in cross-legged position, allow the spine to lengthen gently toward the crown of the head; chest open, shoulders relaxed. Chin dropped slightly toward the chest, head positioned so openings of ears are aligned with the shoulder joints. Shift weight slightly forward on sitting bones to create an arch in the lower back. Proper alignment assists in keeping the body stable and still, supporting meditation practice. If unable to sit in this position, you can sit on a chair or on a bunk with your back supported. *Sit quietly for 5 minutes (see Daily Meditation Practice or Expanding Awareness of Breath).*

(2) Cow/Cat – begin in Cow moving into the position on inhalation, allowing the back and spine to arch, tailbone tilted upward, arms straight with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips. Tilt head back and look up between eyebrows. Then as you exhale transition to Cat, rounding the spine and back, drawing the lower belly in toward the spine, tucking the tailbone between the legs, bringing your chin to the collarbone, looking to the tip of your nose. As your chin comes to your collarbone complete the exhale expelling all the air from the lungs. *Duration: 10 repetitions, inhaling slowly into Cow and exhaling slowly into Cat.*

(3) Sunbird (*Chakravakasana*) – start with wrists under shoulders, knees under hips. Reach your right arm straight out in front of you, and lift and extend your left leg straight back behind you. Arm and leg parallel to floor extending out through fingertips and toes. Then switch reaching forward with left arm and lifting the right leg. *Duration: 5 complete breaths each side, breathing slowly through the nose.*

(4) Downward Facing Dog (*Adhomukha Svanasana*) – starting with wrists under shoulders and knees under hips, hip width apart, walk your hands at least a hand length forward keeping them shoulder width apart and fingers spread wide. Curl your toes under and lift the body. Press your hands firmly into the floor extending your arms, shifting your chest toward your legs while allowing the spine to lengthen toward its base. Keep the back of your head in alignment with your arms. Legs are firmly flexed, no wider than hip width, heels press toward the floor. When first going into Down Dog you can bend one leg and straighten the opposite one, going back and forth, then finally straighten both legs and settle into pose. Heels will probably remain off floor. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

(5) Child's Pose (*Balasana*) – spread knees wide apart, drop buttocks toward feet settling sitting bones onto heels if possible. Keep the spine lengthened as you rest your forehead on the mat or a rolled up towel. Arms can be resting out in front of you or alongside your legs. *Duration: at least 10 complete, deep, relaxed breaths. Focus your attention on your forehead resting against the floor.*

(6) Downward Facing Dog – inhale up to Down Dog again. See alignment of body as described in (4) and focus on your exhalation as you exhale completely. *Duration: 5-10 complete breaths.*

(7) Standing Forward Fold (*Uttanasana*) – from Down Dog inhale walking your hands toward your feet, keeping your legs straight and hip width apart. When you come onto your feet, keep your weight evenly balanced from side to side and heel to toe. Legs stay flexed as you allow the torso to fold over the legs, spine lengthening toward the crown of your head. *Duration: 5 complete breaths*

(8 & 9) Standing Half Forward Fold (*Ardha Uttanasana*) – from Standing Forward Fold, on an inhale bring your back up parallel with the floor first spreading your arms out to the side, then lengthen your arms out in front of you. Arms, back of head and neck and spine all in parallel alignment. Keep your weight firmly balanced on your feet and extend your arms out through your fingertips. *Duration: 5 complete breaths*

(10) Standing Forward Fold – from Standing Half Forward Fold, on the fifth exhale fold forward again into the full Standing Forward Fold. Keep legs flexed, weight balanced on feet, spine lengthened, neck relaxed. *Duration: 5-10 complete breaths.*

(11) Transition to Standing/Mountain – from Standing Forward Fold inhale and come up to Half Forward Bend with arms stretched out to side parallel with floor. On next inhale continue raising the torso keeping the legs flexed and spine lengthened, sweeping the arms up from the sides of the body until the palms of the hands meet over head (see fig. 14). Look to your hands above your head, and as you exhale extend the arms out to the side and down, bringing your palms together and lifting them to your sternum (heart) in a prayer gesture. *Stay here for 5 complete breaths.*

(12) Mountain (*Tadasana*) – keeping your legs flexed, weight balanced on your feet, hip width apart, spine lengthened, shoulder blades slightly together and arms dangling along your side, close your eyes. Staying grounded through the soles of your feet, focus all of your awareness on the sensation of your breath moving in and out of the nose. *Duration: 5-10 complete breaths.*



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Opening (continued)

(13 & 14) Mountain to Standing Forward Fold – bring your hands together in front of your heart at your sternum. Pause for a breath or two. Then upon inhaling, sweep your arms out to the side raising them so that your hands come together over your head. Look to your hands, and upon exhaling, fold forward keeping the spine lengthened while sweeping the arms downward along side your body and settling into the forward fold for *2 complete breaths*.

(15) Low Lunge – from Standing Forward Fold bring your back up parallel with the floor and as you fold your torso forward, step your left leg and foot back into a lunge. This is a “runner’s lunge” with the hips down, looking forward, chest open, hands on fingertips, lifting up behind the knee, back leg extends through the heel, stay on the ball of the foot. *Remain here for 3 complete breaths.*

(16) Standing Spread Leg (*Padottanasana*) – from the Low Lunge begin to move the upper body to the left, spinning and planting your left foot and as your body moves to the center, turning your right foot so your feet are in parallel alignment 4-5 feet apart. The hip joints should be aligned with the ankle joints. Place your hands or fingertips on the floor under your shoulders; lengthen your spine keeping it parallel with the floor. Back of the head and neck stay aligned with the spine as you look down slightly ahead of you at the floor. Keep the legs flexed and strong. *Duration: 3 complete breaths.*

(17) Standing Spread Leg Twist – while in Standing Spread Leg bring your right hand directly under your face, and while keeping your spine extended, inhale and twist the torso open to the left raising the left arm. Turn to look at your left hand; engage your neck muscles so your head does not droop toward the floor. Keep your legs flexed. *Stay for 3 complete breaths, before coming back to Standing Spread Leg, replacing your hands under your shoulders.* Take a breath, and then move the left hand in front of your face and as you inhale, sweep the right arm up twisting the torso open to the right and looking toward the right hand. *Stay on this side for 3 complete breaths before coming back to Standing Spread Leg (16).*

(18) Standing Spread Leg Forward Fold – from Standing Spread Leg (16), walk your hands and arms under your legs keeping them shoulder width apart. Keep your arms straight, palms planted on the floor. Try not to round your back keeping the spine extended toward the crown of your head. *Stay for 3 complete breaths before coming back to Standing Spread Leg.*

(19) Standing Spread Leg to (20) Low Lunge to (21) Standing Forward Fold – from Standing Spread Leg start to move your upper body toward your right foot while pivoting that foot forward. Spin onto the ball of your left foot as you transition back to the Low Lunge. Take a breath and then on your next exhale step the left foot forward, hip width apart from the right foot, lift your back up parallel with the floor keeping your fingertips under your shoulders touching the floor, then fold forward over your legs to come into the Standing Forward Fold. Keep your weight balanced on your feet and your legs flexed. *Stay here for 2 complete breaths.*

(22) Powerful Squat (*Utkatasana*) – from the Standing Forward Fold, with your feet hip width apart, bend your knees and drop your tailbone as if you were going to sit in a chair. Place your hands on your knees and inhaling sweep your arms up shoulder width apart while staying in the squat. Your tailbone should be 4-6 inches higher than your knees. Try to tuck the tailbone slightly as you extend your arms and ribcage upward. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

(23) Standing Forward Fold – from the Powerful Squat straighten your legs and fold the torso forward bringing your back parallel with the floor, arms stretched out to the side in Standing Half Forward Fold. Then exhale and fold forward into the Standing Forward Fold. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

(24) Transition to Standing/Mountain – from Standing Forward Fold inhale and come up to Half Forward Fold with arms stretched out to the side, parallel with floor. On the next inhale continue raising the torso keeping the legs flexed and spine lengthened, sweeping the arms up from the sides of the body until the palms of the hands meet over head. See figure (14). Look to your hands above your head, and as you exhale while standing, extend the arms out to the side and down, bringing your palms together and lifting them to your sternum (heart) in a prayer gesture. *Stay here for 5 complete breaths.*



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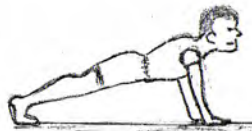
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Purification

This series of the practice is called Sun Salutations (*Surya Namaskara*). It is to be practiced by going through the entire set from (25) to (36), addressing first one side of the body, then the other side. This means that for poses (27, 28 & 29), you do the first set with the left leg back, and for pose (34) with the left leg forward. For the second set you take the right leg back for poses (27, 28 & 29), and the right leg forward for pose (34). All the other poses are performed in both sets as illustrated and described.

(25 & 26) Mountain to Standing Forward Fold – see description (13 & 14).

(27) Low Lunge – see description (15), step the left foot and leg back.

(28) Lunge Twist – while in the Low Lunge place the left hand under the left shoulder and twist your torso open to the right. Extend your right arm and hand toward the ceiling. Keep the back leg straight, lifting up behind the knee. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

(29 & 30) Low Lunge to Plank – from the Lunge Twist bring your right arm down and come back into the Low Lunge for a breath. Then step the right leg back and come into Plank (push-up position). *Stay in Plank for 3 complete breaths.*

(31) Resting to Locust (*Salabhasana*) – from Plank come down onto the floor resting your forehead on the mat. Take a couple of breaths, then on your next exhale lift your head and chest, lift your legs and extend your arms back behind you with your palms facing. Keep your knees lifted, legs and feet close together and draw your shoulder blades together. Keep lifting up from the sternum. *Duration: 5 complete breaths.*

(32 & 33) Resting to Downward Facing Dog – from Locust come down onto the floor resting your forehead with your hands under your shoulders, staying for 2 breaths. Then curl your toes under and press up to Plank, and back to Downward Facing Dog. See description (4). *Stay in Down Dog for 3 complete breaths, exhaling completely out your nose.*

(34 & 35) Low Lunge to Standing Forward Fold – from Down Dog exhale and step the left foot forward into the Low Lunge, then step the right foot next to the left and bring your back up parallel with the floor. Try to keep your fingertips in touch with the mat; keep the legs flexed/straight. Inhale and as you exhale bend into the Standing Forward Fold. *Remain for 5 complete breaths.*

(36) Transition to Mountain – from Standing Forward Fold, inhale and come up to Mountain. See description (24). *Remain in Mountain for 2 complete breaths before starting the set over.*



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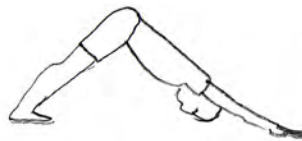
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Resiliency

(37) Mountain (*Tadasana*) – stand in Mountain with arms by your side. *Take a few breaths feeling yourself balanced on both legs and feet.*

(38 & 39) Tree (*Vrksasana*) & Mountain – from Mountain shift your weight into your left leg. Feel yourself grounded through that flexed leg. When ready, pick up your right foot placing and pressing it to the inside of your left thigh, right heel as close to the left groin as possible. Keep your spine lengthened. Bring your hands together in front of your heart at the sternum. Find a spot on the floor to focus your gaze, breath easily. *Stay 5-10 complete breaths before stepping back to Mountain. Then repeat, this time lifting the left foot onto the inside of the right thigh.* Once you become accustomed to being in the pose you can raise your hands arms over your head, shoulder width apart, while staying balanced on the leg, then bring your hands back in front of your heart before stepping back into Mountain.

(40) Warrior I (*Virabhadrasana I*) – from Mountain step your left foot back 3-4 ft. planting its heel on the floor. Your front heel should be aligned with your back heel. Keep the back foot angled forward (45 to 60 degrees) so your hips can face forward. Inhale and raise your arms, and exhale bending the right leg as close to a 90 degree angle as possible. Your right knee should be directly over your right ankle. Keep the back leg straight and strong, back foot firmly rooted. The lower body sinks toward the floor while the upper body lengthens toward the ceiling. *Duration: at least 5 complete breaths. Then come back to Mountain and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

(41) Warrior II (*Virabhadrasana II*) – from Mountain step your left foot back 4-5 ft. planting its heel firmly on the floor. Your front heel should be aligned with the middle of the arch of the back foot, the back foot angled slightly forward. Turn your hips to face the left side of the mat. Inhale and bring your arms up parallel with the floor and as you exhale bend the right leg as close to a 90 degree angle as possible. Your right knee should be directly over your right ankle. Keep the back leg straight lengthening it and pressing the back foot firmly into the mat. Look to the tips of your right fingers. Keep your torso vertically aligned over your hips. *Stay at least 5 complete breaths. Then come back to Mountain and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

(42) Triangle (*Trikonasana*) - from Mountain step your left foot back 4-5 ft. planting its heel firmly on the floor. Your front heel should be aligned with the middle of the arch of the back foot, the back foot angled slightly forward. Turn your hips to face the left side of the mat. Inhale and raise your arms parallel with the floor, as you exhale reach as far forward as you can with your right arm parallel with the floor and shift your hips toward the back of the mat. Then place your left hand on your left hip and right hand on your right shin. Inhale and open the left side of your chest toward the ceiling, feeling the left hip stacking directly above the right hip as your torso and hips rotate open. When you are ready raise your left arm toward the ceiling and turn your head to look at your left hand. *Stay at least 5 complete breaths. Then come back to Mountain and repeat on the other side (right leg back, left leg forward).*

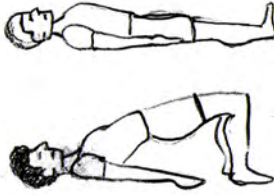
(43) Low Lunge – from Triangle sweep the raised hand forward, bending the front leg, placing your hands on either side of your front foot, and spinning onto the ball of the back foot to come into the Low Lunge.

(44) Downward Facing Dog – from the Low Lunge step back into Down Dog and *stay for 5 complete breaths.* Focus your attention on exhaling out the nose completely.

(45) Child's Pose – from Down Dog come up onto your toes and then drop your knees wide onto the edge of the mat. Bring your big toes together and settle into Child's Pose. See description (5). *Stay in Child's Pose at least 30 seconds.* Focus your attention on the sensation and weight of your forehead resting against the floor.



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Closing & Integration

(46) Staff (*Dandasana*) – come to a seated position stretching your legs out in front of you while keeping your thighs flexed and spine lengthened. Lift up from the crown of your head and extend out through the heels of your flexed feet (toes curl toward your face). Place your hands under your shoulders on the floor or on your thighs. *Stay at least 5 complete breaths.*

(47 & 48) Bridge (*Setu Banda Sarvangasana*) – from Staff come lying down on your back. Bend your legs and walk your feet in close to your buttocks. You should be able to grab your heels with your fingers. Keeping your feet and knees hip with apart, press into the soles of your feet, lift from the lower belly and walk your shoulder blades in. Extend your arms along the floor. Keep pressing the feet into the floor engaging the muscles of the legs, buttocks and back to keep the body lifted. *Stay at least 5 breaths before rolling back down on your back.*

(49) Cobbler (*Baddhakonasana*) – beginning in Staff (46), bring the soles of your feet together, knees out to the side. Keep your back straight, spine lengthened. *Stay for 3 complete breaths.*

(50) Butterfly – while in Cobbler, move your feet forward 3-4” keeping the soles together. Inhale fully and as you exhale fold the torso forward over your legs, forehead dropping toward your feet. You can round your back. Keep your arms, shoulders and neck completely relaxed. Let the body surrender into the pose continuing to let go of any holding and tension. As you exhale in the pose draw your lower belly in toward your spine. Practice Mindful Awareness, let go of thinking and stay connected to your body and breath. *Remain in the pose a minimum of 3 minutes. With practice increase the time to 5 minutes.*

(51) Cobbler – from Butterfly slowly come up to Cobbler. Stretch your legs out in front of you and lean back with your weight on your hands placed on the floor behind your shoulders. *Rest for a few breaths.*

(52) Sphinx – start by lying down on your stomach, head turned to the side. *Stay for 3 complete breaths*, then rise up onto your elbows and forearms. Elbows placed directly under the shoulders, arms resting on the floor shoulder width apart, legs and buttocks relaxed. Put a little pressure into your forearms and elbows so the chest does not sag toward the floor. Keep the belly soft. Practice Mindful Awareness. *Remain in the pose a minimum of 3 minutes. With practice increase the time to 5 minutes or move into Seal (53) for the final 2 minutes.*

(53) Seal – after being in Sphinx for 3 minutes, press your palms into the floor and straighten your arms. Keep the legs and buttocks relaxed. Be careful not to force yourself to stay in the pose if it feels like too much pressure on the lower back. *Remain in Seal for 2 minutes before coming back down to Sphinx first before lying down and turning your head to the other side.*

(54 & 55) Resting to Full Body Twist (*Jathara Parivartanasana*) – from lying on your stomach roll over onto your back resting for 5 complete breaths. Then bend your left leg and with your hands on your left knee, bring it toward your chest. Step the left foot over to the outside of the right knee or thigh. Reach your left arm out to the left side along the floor, back of left shoulder in contact with the floor. Holding your left knee with your right hand, inhale and as you exhale, gently pull the left knee over to the right, bent left leg crossing over the straight right leg. Keep the back of your shoulders against the floor. *Remain for 1 minute. Then come to lying on your back and repeat the pose as described with your right leg (crossing it over to the left, right arm reaching out to the right side).*

(56) Seated Forward Fold (*Pachimottanasana*) – starting in Staff, see description (46), inhale reaching your arms up over your head and exhale folding your torso over your legs, grabbing your feet or your shins. Keep your legs and feet flexed, toes curling toward your face. Lengthen your spine to keep weight off your lower back. *Remain in pose 1 minute.*

(57) Corpse (*Savasana*) – after completing Seated Forward Fold, lie down on your back. Separate your feet shoulder width apart and let the legs and feet roll open. Bring your hands about a foot away from the side of your body, palms open toward the ceiling. Walk your shoulders down away from your ears. Pick your head up, lengthen your neck and settle the head again. Let your body settle into a deep state of relaxation. Allow any pressure or tension from the scalp, forehead, temples, jaw to release to the floor where the back of your head rests. Let your body be completely held by the floor. Let your awareness remain with your breathing. *Stay for at least 5 minutes. This is a good time to practice Deep Relaxation Breathing (Viloma Pranayama). End Savasana completely relaxed breathing naturally.*

Basic Practice

Centering & Opening



Opening (continued)



Purification



Resiliency



Closing & Integration



