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Importance of Ustrasana in Present Era

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Abstract: *Ayurveda is the science of life. It plays an important role to prevent and treat the disease. Ayurveda specifically deals with mind body balance. The main part of it is Yoga and Asana. Yoga provide us a simple remedies, facile skills and procedure of good health. Asana*

gives physical and mental power and tone the body-mind for further exercise. Ustrasana pose known as camel pose. Especially good for back problem, relaxing mind, blood circulation, respiratory system, endocrine and nervous system. It also helps to increase chest size and lungs capacity.

Brings flexibility in chest, abdomen, and neck. Stimulates abdomen organs etc. Ustrasana is a series of the Asana gives very much remedial effect in all the back problems and improve digestion also.

Key words: *Yoga, Asana, Ustrasana, camel pose, nervous system.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda play an important role to prevent and treat the disease. It is the science of life. Health is disturbed today by the sedentary lifestyle, physical and mental pressure or stress, abnormal personal habits and food habits which cause many disease. According to various texts the primary goal of Ayurveda is – “Swasthasya Swastya Rakshanam, Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam”^[1] which means increasing the good health and treat the disease. Ayurveda specifically deals with mind body balance. The main part of it is Yoga and Asana.. It is essential to being healthy.

Yoga appeared at the time of the Vedas and Upanishads. Yoga is India's oldest scientific, ideal devotional regulation. It is a process of teaching the brain and growing its capacity of fine perceptions. Swami Shivananda told, "He who radiates good, divine thoughts does immense good unto himself and to the world also". Yoga provide us a simple remedies, facile skills and procedure of good health and hygiene to gain physical and mental fitness in less time.^[2] Yoga is praised by modern medical science because it increase immunity, give disease free life and decrease the stress of present fast life. It is a scientific procedure by which we can develop our own inner strength with inself.

In Sanskrit language Yoga means “adduction”, add the soul of human from the God. Yoga provides us moral and spiritual growth but also useful in prevent physical and mental disease.^[3] Yoga and Asana effect the physiology of important anatomical structure during procedure and steps.^[4] The definition of Asana is “Sthira Sukham Asanas”^[5] which means well balanced, pleasant position of body. Asana are the “skillful exercises” that gives physical and mental power and tone the body-mind for further exercise.^[6] Asana helps to synchronize the mind with body.^[7]

II. YOGASANA

Patanjali Yoga described about eight branches –Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharna, Dhyana, Samadhi. Patanjali Yoga given third place to Asana^[8], while “Hatha Yoga” given first place to “Asana” because it giving physical and mental happiness. “Ha” means sun which means energy of solar plexus, “Tha” means moon which means energy of the emotions, present in the limbic system of brain, so both the energy come together in the Yoga.^[9]

If Asanas is done accurately in relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, the muscles of the body get relax because these relaxing impulses go back to the brain and relax it. Other benefits are mental

balance, good health, calmness of mind. The ancient Yogacharyas advised about the mastery of one Asana. Ustrasana is a series of the Asana gives very much remedial effect in all the back problems and improve digestion also.

III. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

- A. To elaborate the benefits and anatomical structures of Ustrasana.
- B. To escape from injuries which held by doing Ustrasana.

IV. MATERIAL AND METHODS

- 1) Texts related to *Yoga-Asana* and their commentaries.
- 2) Other source are online information, print media, journals etc.

A. Ustrasana

Yoga is an effective exercise option to relieve your body of daily stress, maintain your health, and stay in shape. In fact, there are hundreds of poses (Asanas) and breathing exercises (Pranayama) that help you achieve heightened levels of agility as well as well-being in Yoga. Out of these poses, there is one pose in particular that can help you if you are suffering from any kind of back related problems like the Camel Pose (Ustrasana), which has been described in detail below.

Ustrasana pose known as Camel pose. Ustrasana in Sanskrit literally means 'Camel Pose'. The body looks like the shape of camel so it is called as Ustrasana.

A very powerful posture, the camel pose is an advanced pose meant for intermediate and advanced Yoga practitioners. A part from benefitting the back, if you are feeling low and tired, the Camel Pose can help you de-stress and relax the mind. This pose is said to benefit the circulatory, nervous, endocrine and the respiratory systems. Especially good for a back problem, relaxing mind, blood circulation, respiratory system, endocrine and nervous system.

B. Steps

Enumerated below are the Camel Pose steps. Strict supervision is required if you are an intermediate *Yoga* practitioner.

- 1) With your knees apart at a width equal to the distance between your hips, kneel down on the floor or *Yoga* mat. Your thighs must be perpendicular to the floor.
- 2) Now, slightly rotate your thighs inwards, while narrowing your hip points. Make sure that your buttocks are not stiff. To understand this better, imagine yourself drawing the bones you utilize for sitting, upwards and into your upper body. Keep your outer hips relaxed and loose. Finally, press the top of the feet and the shins onto the floor tightly.
- 3) Next, place your hands on your buttocks. Your fingers should pointing in the downward direction, and the base of your palms should be on the top of your buttocks.
- 4) Spread your back pelvis using your hands. Further, lengthen down the back pelvis to the tail bone. Gently, try to move the tail bone forward towards the pubis. While doing this, make sure that your groin does not move in the forward direction. In order to prevent this from happening, press down on the front of your thighs. This will counter the forward action of the tailbone.
- 5) Press the shoulder blades against the back ribs and lift your head. While lifting your head, inhale deeply.
- 6) The next step is to lean back by using support from the firm tailbone and the shoulder blades. Now keeping the thighs perpendicular to the floor, you will have to touch both your feet with your hands simultaneously. Beginners will find it very hard to drop straight into this posture.
- 7) Tilt your thighs backwards, and simultaneously twist your body to one side as little as you can, to be able to touch your right feet with your right hand. At this point your left hand is fully stretched behind your back. Now, return your thighs back to a perpendicular level and your torso back to a neutral angle.
- 8) Repeat the step in order to touch your left foot. Alternately, you can also turn your toes inwards and raise your heels to reach the foot if you are unable to bend backwards enough.
- 9) Extend your chest towards the ceiling and lift your pelvis. At this point you can feel you're the back of your ribs veering away from your pelvis. With your fingers pointing towards your toes, press the soles of your feet firmly with your palms. The elbow creases must face forward. You have the choice of dropping your head back further or letting it be in the neutral position.
- 10) Hold this pose for a full 30 seconds. As you get a little more comfortable you will be able to hold it for up to a minute. Start your exit by bringing your hands towards your pelvis. Lift your torso and head up by pushing the pelvis downwards. Inhale while doing this.
- 11) Rest in a Child's Pose (*Balasana*) for a minute.^[10]

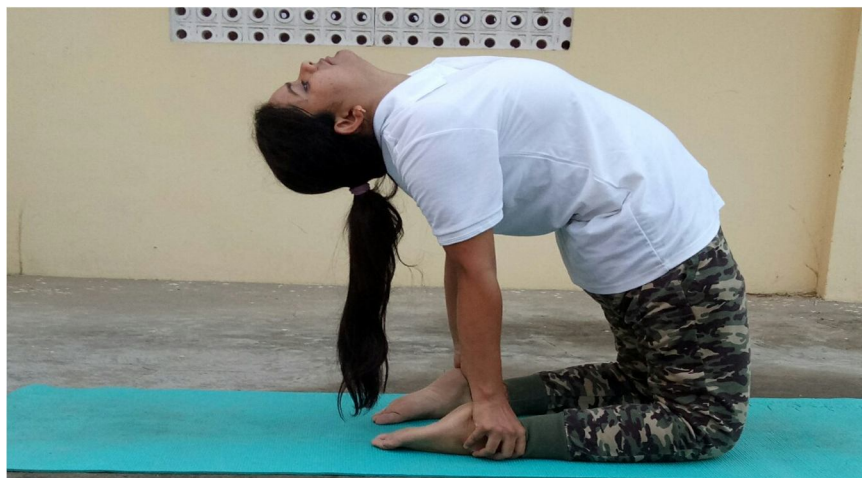


Fig. USTRASANA

C. Camel Pose Benefits

- 1) Helps to increase chest size and lungs capacity.
- 2) Brings flexibility in chest, abdomen, and neck.
- 3) Stimulates abdomen organs.
- 4) Improve the function of the respiratory system. Beneficial for Asthma patient.
- 5) Activate whole respiratory organs and nerves.
- 6) Cures problems related to Neck, Shoulders, and back.
- 7) Cures *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*.
- 8) Strengthens the back muscles.
- 9) Stimulate thyroid gland.
- 10) Releases back pain.
- 11) Increases blood circulation to the brain.
- 12) Helps to improve Posture.
- 13) Reduce the fats in the stomach.
- 14) Improve digestion.^[11]

D. Contraindications for Ustrasana (The Camel Pose)

- 1) *Ustrasana* should be avoided by those who suffer from serious neck problems.
- 2) Those suffering from vertigo should perform this *Asana* with caution, without losing balance. Have a *Yoga* trainer to assist you in such cases.

E. Precautions

Since it is an advanced pose, there are several precautions which you must take when attempting to perform the camel pose.

- 1) This pose is not for those suffering from high blood pressure or migraines.
- 2) Patients suffering from insomnia should also avoid this *Yoga* pose.
- 3) This pose can cause serious back and neck injuries, so guidance from an experienced instructor is recommended.^[12]

F. Beginner's tip

You tend to strain your back and neck a lot in this pose. A beginner's tip for camel pose would be to keep a chair above the feet and touch the base of the chair with your hands instead of your feet.

G. Benefit To Specific Body Parts

The entire frontal section of the body is stretched to the maximum along with the groin, ankles and thighs. Benefits include:-

- 1) Strengthening of the arms and shoulders
- 2) Relieves mild pain in the back
- 3) Expands the rib cage Improves blood circulation to brain

H. Anatomy

Camel Pose benefits the following muscles

- 1) Psoas major, Rectus femoris, Vastus lateralis, Hamstrings muscles of lower limb.
- 2) Anterior neck muscles, Apex of lung, Deltoid, Pectoralis major, Pectoralis minor, Rectus abdominis muscles.

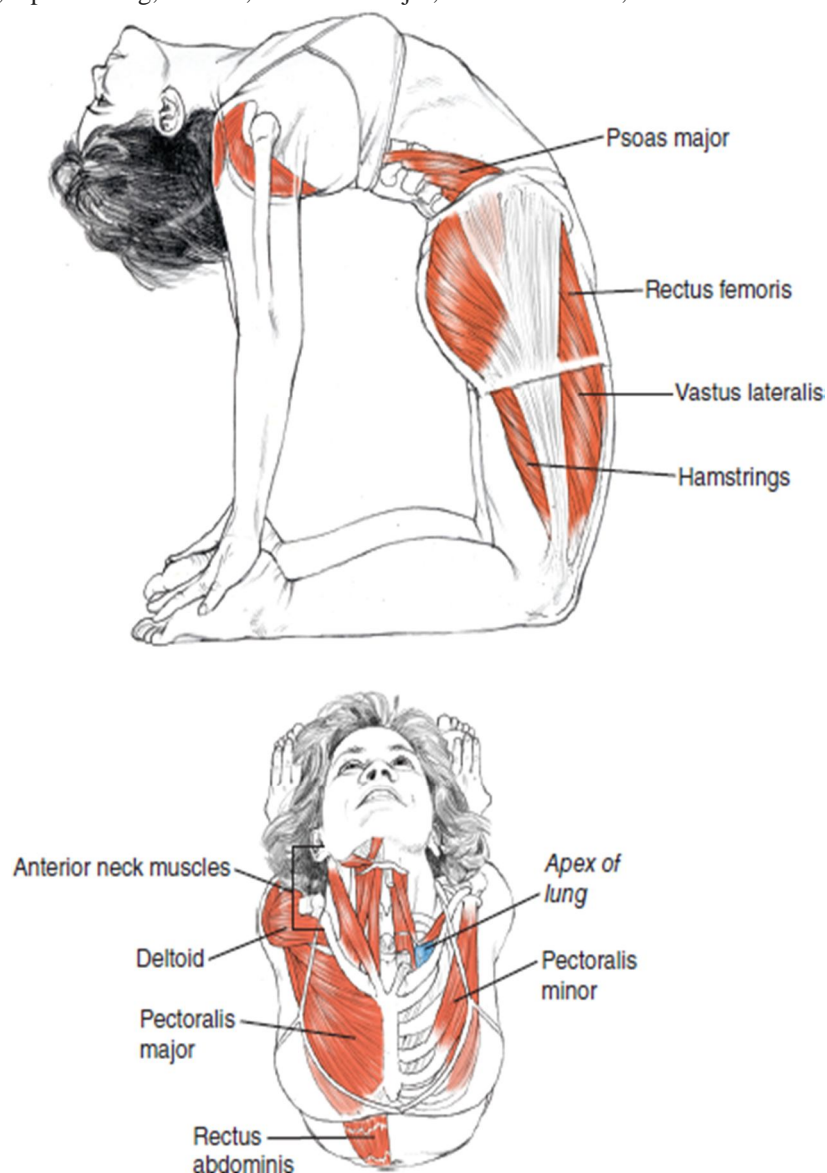


Fig. Anatomical structure effected by ustrasana

I. Therapeutic Applications

Listed below are the therapeutic applications of the Camel Pose:

- 1) Respiratory ailments
- 2) Mild pain in the back
- 3) Anxiety and fatigue
- 4) Menstrual discomfort

J. Variations

There are many variations for the Camel Pose; listed below are a few.

- 1) *Chair Camel*: Touch the edge of the chair instead of the feet, as mentioned in the Beginner's tip section.
- 2) *Wall Camel*: Touch a wall behind you with your head and place the palms on the wall.
- 3) *Cross Camel*: Touch your feet with opposite hands.

K. Preparatory Poses

The camel pose is an advanced pose, it requires a bit of conditioning before you attempt it. Preparatory poses for the Camel Pose to prevent any injury are as follows:

- 1) Cobra Pose (*Bhujangasana*)
- 2) Locust Pose or Grasshopper Pose (*Salabhasana*)
- 3) Bow Pose (*Dhanurasana*)
- 4) Reclined Hero Pose (*Supta Virasana*)
- 5) Bridge Pose (*Setu Bandha*)
- 6) Hero Pose (*Virasana*)
- 7) Upward Facing Dog Pose (*Urdhva Mukha Svanasana*)^[13]

L. Follow up Poses

It is necessary to relieve the muscles of the tension built up after performing the Camel Pose. In order to do that, there are follow up poses that should be performed after performing the Camel Pose. Some of these are as follows:

- 1) Staff Pose (*Dandasana*)
- 2) Locust Pose or Grasshopper Pose (*Salabhasana*)
- 3) Bridge Pose (*Setu Bandha*)
- 4) Supported Headstand (*Sirsasana*)
- 5) Upward Bow Pose (*Urdhva Dhanurasana*)
- 6) Hero Pose (*Virasana*)
- 7) Upward Facing Two - Foot Staff Pose
- 8) Inclined Plane
- 9) Locust Pose
- 10) Upward Bow
- 11) Pigeon Pose
- 12) One Legged King Pigeon Pose – (*Eka Pada Rajakapotasana*)
- 13) Upward-Facing Dog
- 14) Wild Thing
- 15) Half Frog Pose – (*Ardha Bhikasana*)
- 16) Wheel Pose
- 17) Bow Pose
- 18) King Pigeon Pose
- 19) Bridge Pose
- 20) Fish Pose
- 21) Cobra Pose^[14]

V. CONCLUSION

Yoga is the science of life. *Yoga* is India's oldest scientific, ideal devotional regulation. It is a process of teaching the brain and growing its capacity of fine perceptions. *Yoga* provide us a simple remedies, facile skills and procedure of good health and hygiene to gain physical and mental fitness in less time. Daily practice of *Yoga*, *Asana* and *Pranayama* with proper attention gives result pure blood supply to body parts like heart, liver, lungs, pancreas, intestine, kidney, ligaments, tissues, muscles, and glands of human body. It also increases the digestion power. It control power of the sense organs and awareness. *Yoga* and *Asana* will give disease and stress free healthy life. Anatomical structures during breath and postures as lungs, ligaments, muscles and bones, ligaments, joints, muscles and tendon during movement are involved. Anatomical structures and their work are behind the scientific benefit of *Yoga* and *Asana*. *Ustrasana* is a complete *Asana* which manage the health of human body and improve the spiritual level. *Ustrasana* is a series of the *Asana* gives very much remedial effect in all the back problems and improve digestion also.



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