

CONCEPTUAL STUDY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF *PASCHIMATANASANA* IN DAILY LIFEDr. Sukh Ram¹, Dr. Durgawati Devi², Dr. Deepak Sharma^{*3}, Dr. Pankaj Kumar⁴ and Dr. Bhupender Kumar⁵¹MD Scholar Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.²Head and Associate Professor Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.³MD Scholar Department of Sharir Rachana, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.⁴MD Scholar Department of Swasthavritta and Yoga, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.⁵MD Scholar Department of Rasashastra and Bhaishajya Kalpana, National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur.***Corresponding Author: Dr. Deepak Sharma**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science which is meant for healthy human life and to achieve sound health *Yoga* and *Asana* mentioned in ancient *Samhita* plays a vital role. *Asana* means a state attained which is comfortable and steady. *Paschimatanasana* is a *Asana* which increases the vitality, improves digestion and provides strength to human spine.

INTRODUCTION

Paschimatanasana is known as forward bend pose in western world. The term *Paschimatanasana*, is derived from the Sanskrit root words *paschima*, which means "back" *tana* which means "stretch" or "straight," and *asana*, which means "posture."

Review

Asana is a Sanskrit word which is correlated as "posture" or "pose". *Asana* can also be described as "a steady, comfortable seat," particularly for the purpose of meditation *Paschimatanasana* is mentioned in the *Shiva samhita* as *Ugrasana* and as one of the four accomplished *asanas*. *Ugra* means formidable, powerful or noble. *Hathayogapradipika*, *Hatharatnavali* and *Gheranda Samhita* also explain this *asana*.

In *Gheranda Samhita*, *Paschimatanasana* is explained as to Spread the legs out on the ground, stiff like a stick. Place the forehead between the front parts below the knees and carefully hold the toes with the hands.^[1]

In *Hathayoga pradipika* *Paschimatanasana* is mentioned as stretching the legs in front on the ground, like a stick. Bend forward, holding the toes with both hands and placing the forehead on the knees, is called *Paschimatanasana*.^[2]

In literature *Sritatvanidhi*, *Ardha Paschimatanasana* and *Urdhva Paschimatanasana* is mentioned and there is no description of *Paschimatanasana*, but a similar *asana* is named as *Garbhasana*. In *Ardha Paschimatanasana*, stretch one foot out and press the perineum with the heel of the other foot. Extend the arms and grip the toes of the

foot. Place the head above the knee. In *Urdhva Paschimatanasana*, after attaining *Paschimatanasana* pose one foot has to be placed behind the neck. In *Garbhasana*, Stretch the legs like a stick on the ground and hold the toes with the hands. Then rest the forehead on the knees.

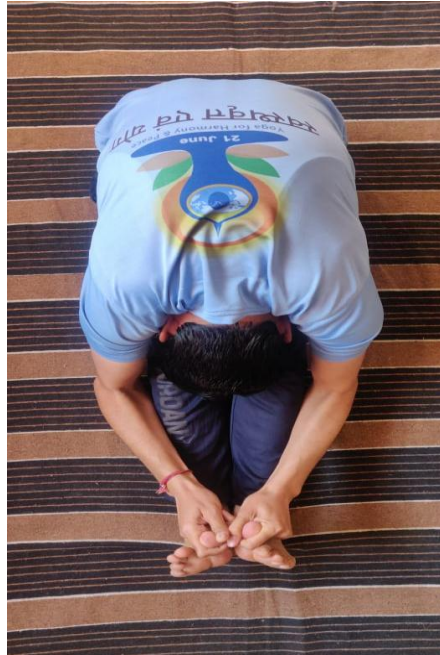
In modern texts of yoga *Swami Vishnudevananda*^[3] explained it as to stretch the legs and keep the legs and thighs firmly on the floor. Bend forward and catch hold of your toes with respective hands. Place the head on the knees by bringing the chest forward.

BKS Iyengar has mentioned *Paschimatanasana* and its varieties *Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimatanasana*, *Trianga Mukhaikapda Paschimatanasana*, *Parivrutta Paschimatanasana* and *Urdhwamukha Paschimatanasana*.^[4] Acharaya gave *Brahmacharyasana* as a synonym of *Paschimatanasana* apart from *Ugrasana*. His *Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimatanasana* is similar to *Ardha Paschimatanasana* mentioned in *Sritatvanidhi*. *Paschimatanasana*, *Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimatanasana*, *Trianga Mukhaikapda Paschimatanasana* and *Urdhwamukha Paschimatanasana* are also mentioned by Patthabhi Jois^[5] and practiced in *Ashtanga Yoga*. In *Yoga Makaranda*, *Krishnamacharya*^[6] also mentions these fourth varieties. He named *Paschimatanasana* as *Adhomukha Paschimatanasana* and *Urdhwamukha Paschimatanasana* in supine position.

Steps to follow

- Sit up with the legs stretched out straight in front of you on the floor.

- Keep the spine erect and toes flexed towards you.
- Bring your respiration to normal.
- Breathing in, slowly raise both the arms straight above your head and stretch up.
- Slowly breathe out and bend forward from the hip joint, chin moving toward the toes keeping the spine erect.
- Place your hands on your legs, wherever they reach, without putting much effort.
- If possible hold of your toes and pull on them to help you go forward.
- Stay in this position as long as possible.
- After the exertion limit reached inhale and raise up stretching up your arms straight above your head.
- Breathe out and bring your arms down placing the palms on the ground.
- Relax for a while and try to feel the changes that occurred in the body.



Significance

- It reverses the breath's flow, carries the air from the front to the back part of the body i.e. breath to flow through the *Sushumna*.
- It kindles the gastric fire of the stomach, flattens the belly, and brings good health to men.
- It tones the abdominal organs and keeps them free from sluggishness.
- It also tones the kidneys, rejuvenates the whole spine and improves the digestion.
- A good stay in this pose massages the heart, the spinal column and the abdominal organs, which feel refreshed and the mind is rested.
- This *asana* increases vitality, helps to cure impotency and leads to sex control. Hence, this asana was called *Brahmacharyasana*.
- This asana helps the stomach to become slender by dissolving its fat.
- It also increases *Jathara agni*, helps food to digest well, and strengthens the organs of the digestive systems.
- It cures weakness in the hands and legs resulting from a loss of appetite and low digestive fire, as well as indolence and giddiness stemming from an aberration in the liver, and gas problems in the stomach.
- This *Asana* ensures proper blood circulation.^[7]
- It cures diseases of spine by making it resilient.
- It cures skin diseases and removes bad odour.
- It reduces respiratory excursions and induces longevity.
- This *Asana* relieves arthritis, sciatica, backache and pain in knees, thighs and the legs.
- It cures gastritis, enlarged spleen, seminal diseases and dyspepsia. It strengthens the nerves, joints and muscles of the legs.
- *Paschimatanasana* stretches the hamstring muscles and increases flexibility in the hip joints.^[8] It tones and massages the entire abdominal and pelvic region, including the liver, pancreas, spleen, urogenital system, kidneys and adrenal glands. It helps to remove excess weight in this area and stimulates circulation to the nerves and muscles of the spine.

Limitations

Benefits and importance of *Paschimatanasana* are immense but there are certain circumstances when the practitioner should avoid this pose like

- People with acute abdominal pain, lumbago, hernia, hydrocele, heart ailments, back problems as like back pain and other and spondylosis should avoid this posture^[9]
- People who have difficulty bending their backs should exercise caution when performing this asana^[10]
- Avoid practicing this asana if patient suffer from asthma or any respiratory problem or if patient have recently had any type of abdominal surgery.

Practitioner would also have to skip this if they are pregnant or if they have diarrhea. If practitioner has any spinal problem, make sure that they perform *Paschimatanasana* under the supervision of a yoga instructor^[11]

- People who suffer from slipped disc should not practice this asana

Duration of practice

In the beginning, practice 3 to 5 rounds of 3 to 10 breaths each. After good practice, maintain this asana for one round of 1 to 5 minutes (approximately 15 to 75 breaths).

Preparatory Poses^[12]

- *Janu Sirsasana*
- *Uttanasana*
- *Balāsana*

Follow up Poses^[13]

- *Adho Mukha Virasana*
- *Dandasana*
- *Uttana Shishosana*

CONCLUSION

In Present era life is full of stress and unhealthy life style which leads to lowering of *Jathragni*. *Paschimatanasana* plays a vital role in minimising these stress induced and life style disorders. It tones the abdominal organs, increases the gastric functions, tones the back, thigh muscles, increases the vitality and rejuvenates the body and mind. It reduces respiratory excursions and induces longevity. So *Paschimatanasana* is the *Asana* which is utmost important for daily life.

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