

LOWER BACK PAIN CURE WITH YOGA

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Introduction



Hi I am Nilendu Bhattacharya and I am the author of a Yoga blog <http://www.headfirstyoga.com> which has around 120 posts on Yoga and Acupressure as of December 2009 and growing every week.

Professionally I work as Product Manager in SyncEx (<http://www.syncex.com>) which designs portal solutions for various clients on IBM, Liferay and many other Portal Servers. At present, I am located in central India and have been working in IT and Software field for more than 14 years now and in course of my career travelled to many parts of India and United States of America.

In my free time, when I am not working on some client issues or thinking of some new product, I practice Yoga. Yoga not only heals physically but also provides stress relief and makes you stronger internally and externally. I really enjoy practicing yoga and feel that this ancient art should be spread and shared with as many people as possible. Yoga helps me to have a positive outlook towards life and I want to help people learn more about this amazing practice. I have been practicing yoga for around 8 years now and look forward to practice it as long as possible.

I also study and practice Acupressure and currently also learning more about Ayurveda (ancient Indian medicine system).

I am blessed with a loving and beautiful, wife Sapna and two naughty kids Shubham and Debojeet with whom I spend most of my spare time.

I have my house in Baroda which is a city in western India and have my parents there. Whatever I have learned and achieved till now is only possible due to their blessings and god's grace.

I would like to thank Abhijeet Mukherjee for the poses which are used in this book.

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Sharing this ebook

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In case you have any suggestions or want to use this ebook commercially, you can contact me at nilendu.bhattacharya@gmail.com I would be happy to receive emails from you informing me whenever you share this document or if you would like to share some stories of people who recover from back pain using this book.

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Introduction

In the summer of 2009 I suffered lower back pain and at that time I was alone at home for few weeks. It was extremely painful experience for me and I was bed ridden alone in the house. Getting up to drink a glass of water was also difficult task. That pain made me realize how inconvenient and painful the condition could be. In the course of next two or three weeks I practiced certain yoga poses which led to my recovery from the pain. Six months down the line my lower back is pain free and in quite a good shape. Purpose of this e-book is to share my experiences which will help others to get relief from back pain for ever.

Lower back, also known as lumbar region supports upper body and helps us to stand erect. Lower back pain is a condition about which most of us are aware though it may be through someone you know or some celebrity. Usually we ignore it until it strikes us. Today millions are suffering from lower back which render them helpless and in pain, restricted their movement. Even routine tasks like walking or stretching to fetching something in the kitchen can be unbearably painful to do.

Patients become helpless and it generates negative feeling and stress. Financial loss is also considerable because of medication and loss of working hours. Some people have to change their profession because of inability to sit for long hours cause by back pain and that also results in monetary loss. Social as well as family life is also affected directly due to back pain. In America itself more than 20 million people suffer from back pain every year and similar is the case in India also. Incidences of back pain are increasing day by day.

Causes of Back Pain

Back pain can be caused by variety of reasons although exact reasons are difficult to pin point. Mostly pain can be caused due to injured muscles and ligaments in the lower back region or wear and tear of the muscles. People with weak back are vulnerable to back pain. Another reason attributed to lower back pain is inflexible lower back muscles.

Usually taller people with a weak back are more likely to suffer back pain as the back as to support more weight proportionately. Overweight people with sedentary lifestyle and lot of weight in the abdomen region are also like to suffer back pain. Lower back pain is also caused in lot of people when they are careless and try to lift or move heavy weights or furniture at home.

Pregnancy is also one of the major causes of back pain. It is very common problem during pregnancy. During pregnancy the shape of the spine changes

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due to extra weight on the abdomen and lower back is under more pressure which causes lower back pain.

Another type of back pain where the legs are also affected is known as sciatica. This is also known as slipped disc problem. This is caused by nerves between the spinal vertebrae to being pressed due to inflammation, which can cause pain in the entire lower body including legs where ever the nerve is present. Patients can feel a sensation as if needle is being pierced. This is less common as compared to the previous type of pain.

Approach of Curing Back Pain

If you are reading this e-book, chances are that either you or someone you know suffers from lower back pain. In my view ideal approach should be prevent the occurrence of back pain in the first place. In case you already suffer from back pain then you should first look to cure it and then go on to make your back strong enough to prevent the pain attack in the future.

Back care consists of primarily three things.

1. Start with Proper rest and medication.
2. Yoga practice of relevant poses.
3. Follow the Precautions

Proper rest and medication

During the initial period proper rest is must. If there is severe pain then it is better to rest on a hard surface for a long time and may be few days. When you lie down the back muscles are under minimum stress and gets the time to start healing itself. Try to minimize the need to get up from rest. Longer you rest better your chances for recovering earlier. Try to lie on your stomach more than than the back.

Usually anti inflammatory drugs or ointments are prescribed along with pain killers. I found that applying the ointments which are used for muscle sprain and available over the counter on the affected area provided a lot of relief. Take care than apply the ointment gently and do not try to massage the area.

Once you gain the initial mobility then also walk or move slowly.

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Yoga poses for lower back pain

For the back it is mainly the backward bending poses which are useful for back pain. During the back bends, the back is stretched which increases the blood flow in the region and heals the injuries. Back bends also strengthens the back, back of the legs and upper back which prevents injuries.

Basic Poses

In the Basic Poses, not much back strength is used and they are easy to perform and at the same time provide relief.

1. Bal Asana (Child Pose)

Bal Asana or the child pose involves lying in the child pose on your stomach on the mat. Here the position of the legs gives a slight stretch to the back without putting any pressure on it. This pose should be done after each pose



Steps for Bal Asana (Child Pose)

- Lie down on the mat on your stomach.
- Move the face to right side and bring the right hand near your head.
- Now move the right leg up so that the right thigh is almost perpendicular to the body.
- Left hand may remain near the body.
- Adjust the body so that you feel very relaxed.
- Stay in this pose as long as comfortable and then repeat for left side.

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Beneficial Effects : This pose is very relaxing and can be used for sleeping and also should be repeated after practicing the other poses to relax the back.

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2. Kati Uttanasana (Raised Waist Pose)

Kati Uttanasana is another simple but effective pose which can be practiced multiple times in the day. This pose removes the tension from the back and provide strength to the back.



Steps for Kati Uttanasana (Raised Waist Pose)

- Lie down on the mat.
- Bring the feet near the hips.
- With inhalation tighten the back and try to create an arch without lifting either the hips or the upper back.
- Stay in this position as long as you are comfortable with normal breathing.
- With exhalation relax your back.

Practice this pose multiple times in the day. This will provide relaxation to your lower back and strengthen it.

Beneficial Effects : Lower Back. Slip Disk and Sciatica.

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3. Markat Asana (Monkey Pose)

Markat Asana stretches the entire back and increases the blood flow. The flexibility of the back increases. You can practice this poses even if you do not have back troubles as this poses is a good relaxation pose.

Steps for Markat Asana (Monkey Pose)

- Lie down on the mat. and spread the arms so that they are perpendicular to the body.
- Bring the feet near the hips.
- Inhale and with exhalation turn the knees to your left touching the left knee to the mat.
- Turn the face towards right side.
- You will face a slight stretch in the lower back region. For more stretching you can bring the knees upwards towards the left arm.
- Stay in this pose for 15 seconds to 30 seconds.
- Now switch sides and stretch in opposite direction.



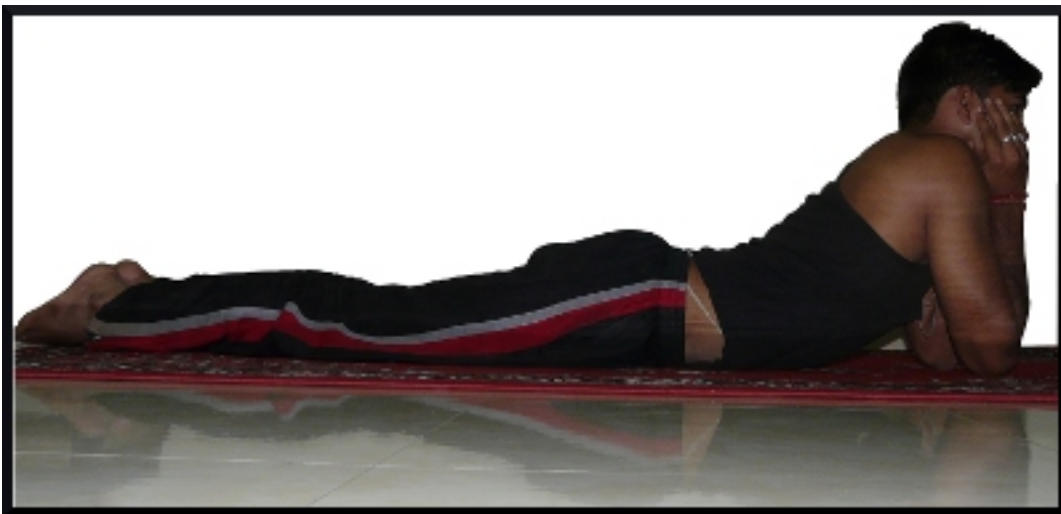
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4. Makar Asana (Crocodile Pose)

Makar Asana (Crocodile Pose) relaxes the lumbar region without much physical efforts. There are two poses involved. First is the basic pose and in the second pose, feet are brought towards the hip with inhalation and taken back with exhalation.

Steps for Makar Asana 1 (Crocodile Pose)

- Lie on the mat on your stomach.
- With inhalation, raise your chin and place the hands under it so that the hands are on both sides of the face.
- Placing the elbows near the body will raise you more, where as placing the elbows forward, away from the body with provide more stretch to the spine. Maintain a proper distance so that the elbows are under the face.
- Stay in this pose for a minute or so.



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Steps for Makar Asana 2

- This is basically extension of Makar Asana.
- While in Makar Asana, with inhalation bring the feet towards the hip and with exhalation take them towards the ground. This should be done slowly taking care that the leg movement is synchronized with the breathing.
- Practice this for 10 to 20 times.
- This activity will relax the muscles.



Beneficial Effects : Slip Disk and Sciatica.

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Intermediate Level Yoga Poses

In intermediate Level poses, we use the back more actively and also use the arms and the legs to stretch the back. These poses provide strength to the back and should be practiced when back pain is not severe and you have the ability to atleast move freely.

1. Sarpa Asana (Snake Pose)

Sarpa Asana (Snake Pose) involves lifting your body with the help of the back muscles. Therefore this pose improves strength of upper back, lower back and the shoulder muscles.

Steps for Sarpa Asana (Snake Pose)

- Lie down on the mat on your abdomen.
- Clasp your hands behind your body.
- Now with inhalation raise your upper body as much as possible.
- Raise the hands and try to stretch them.
- Stay in this pose for as long as possible and then with exhalation come down slowly.



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2. Ardh Salbhasana (Half Locust Pose)

In Salbhasana (Locust) pose, legs are raised instead of the upper body. This is more difficult than the previous poses, but extremely beneficial. Lower back is very important to have a upright body. Older people do not have lower back strength and that is why they slouch. Practicing this pose regularly will ensure good lower back strength and back troubles will be out of our way.

Steps for Ardh Salbhasana

- Lie down on the mat on your abdomen.
- The hands should be place adjacent to the body.
- With inhalation raise your right leg above to around 30 degrees. Take around 5 breaths and then again with inhalation raise to 60 degrees. Stay in this pose for as much time as possible with normal breathing.
- With inhalation bring down the leg to ground slowly.



Beneficial Effects : Lower Back and Sciatica.

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3. Shalabhasana (Locust Pose)

Shalabhasana is extension of Ardh Salbhasana pose. In this pose both the legs are raised and it is much more difficult comparatively.

Steps for Shalabhasana

- Lie down on the mat on your abdomen.
- The hands should be place adjacent to the body.
- With inhalation raise your right leg above to around 30 degrees. Take around 5 breaths and then again with inhalation raise to 60 degrees. Stay in this pose for as much time as possible with normal breathing.
- With inhalation bring down the leg to ground slowly.



Beneficial Effects : Lower Back. Slip Disk and Sciatica.

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4. Ardh Dhanush Asana (Half Bow Pose)

Ardh Dhanush Asana stimulates the entire back and especially the middle and the lower regions. This is almost a must pose if you want to cure back pain soon.

Steps for Ardh Dhanush Asana

- Lie on the mat on your abdomen.
- Fold your knees and hold them with the hands.
- With inhalation raise your upper body.
- Now try to lift the legs as much as possible. If you are in difficult stage of back pain you can skip this step and only lift the upper body.
- Hold the pose for as long as possible.
- With exhalation slowly come down and extend our legs again.



Beneficial Effects : Entire back is stretched and there is lot of blood flow in the back region. If you practice this pose for a few days, you will gain strength very fast. If you practice forward bends, follow that pose with this pose.

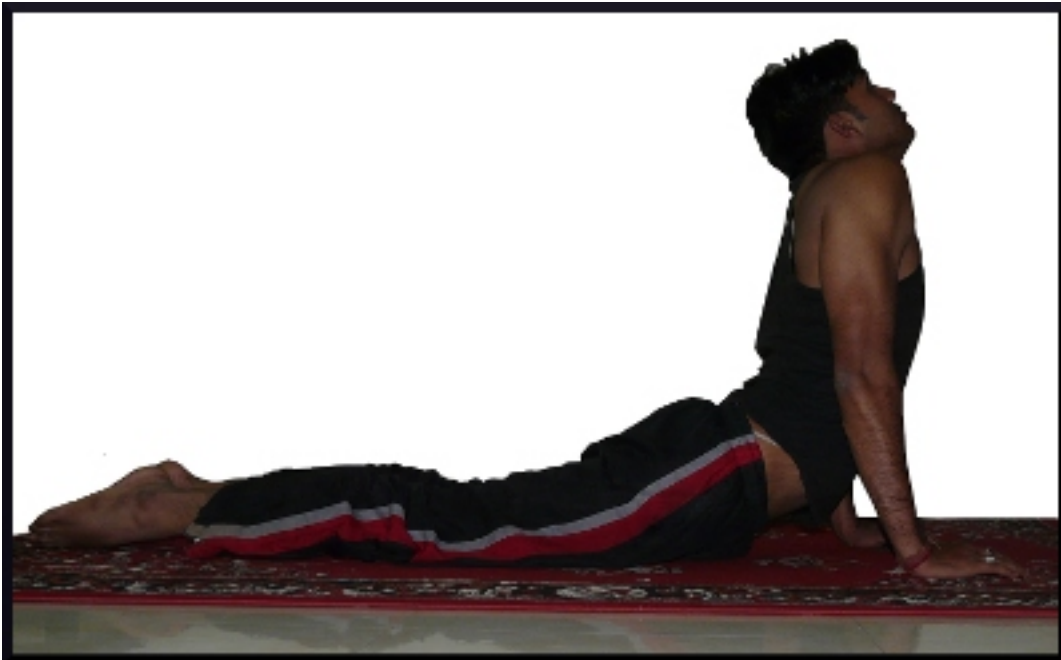
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5. Bhujanga Asana (Cobra Pose)

Bhujanga Asana is one of the most popular and effective poses for all back problems. Many patients have benefitted from this beautiful pose and got rid of back problems.

Steps for Bhujanga Asana (Cobra Pose)

- Lie on the mat on your abdomen.
- Place the hands neat the chest.
- With inhalation raise your upper body till the hip.
- Try to look up. Stay in the pose with normal breathing.
- Stay in the pose for 15 seconds to begin with and then come down with exhalation.



Beneficial Effects : Lower Back problems, Slip Disk, Sciatica and all spinal problems

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Follow Up Poses

Follow up poses need to be practiced when you have recovered from back pain problems and want to enhance the mobility and flexibility of your back muscles.

In general if you practice the previous poses they are sufficient to solve the back pain issues.

Although there are many poses which are beneficial for the back I am only covering two of them in this book for those who may be interested in further practice and knowing more. In future I intend to include more poses.

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1. Trikon Asana (Triangle pose)

Trikon Asana is a pose which should be practiced when you have done all the previous asanas for few weeks and you want to now strengthen the back so that in future you do not have back problems.

Steps to Practice Trikon Asana

- Stand on the mat with feet around 3 feet to 3.5 feet apart and hands extended out.
- Stand for few seconds while inhaling deeply.
- Rotate your right feet outward and make it perpendicular to your knees. Rotate your left feet around 30 degrees inside.
- Exhale and bend down on the right hand side and place the palm on the floor. Extend the left arm up. Look at the thumb of the left hand and try to align the left and right hand in one line.
- Stay in the pose for 15 seconds and then come out with exhalation and repeat on the other side.



Beneficial Effects : Back muscles are strengthened.

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2. Ushtra Asana (Camel Pose)

Ushtra Asana or the camel pose, helps us to extend the entire back from the neck to the hamstring. It improves the entire back region.

- Steps to Practice Ushtra Asana
- Sit on the mat in Vajrasana.
- Now rise and balance the body on the knees.
- Now with the right hand hold the right ankle and with the left hand hold the left ankle.
- Stay in this pose for some time and come out single side at a time.



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Precautions

Generally you should avoid any activity where in stress is applied on the lower back and it generally involves lifting weight and forward bending. Here are the list of activities which should be avoided during back pain and for some weeks till you recover completely and gain back strength.

- Do not lean or bend forward.
- Do not sit on the ground.
- Do not practice any sitting yoga poses.
- Do not practice any forward bending yoga poses.
- Do not lift any weight.

People with Hernia, heart diseases and stomach ailments like ulcers or kidney ailments should avoid the intermediate poses which put pressure on the abdomen area.

Diet

Try to have light food and avoid constipation. Take lots of water and fresh fruits and vegetables as this will detoxify the body.

Final Advice

With my personal experience and what I have seen with others, I can say that you can manage and cure back pain. This book provides you with the knowledge with which you can get rid of your pain. No amount of reading can cure you. Have faith and apply the knowledge & witness the benefits.