

Yoga Training Notes: Balancing Asanas (2005)

Balancing asanas develop the cerebellum, the brain center that controls how the body works in motion. Most people are uncoordinated in their movements so their bodies constantly have to compensate for their lack of balance in order to avoid falling or knocking things over. This inefficient method of proceeding expends maximum effort and energy for the minimum results, creating considerable additional strain on the body. These Asanas induce physical balance, stilling unconscious movement. As the moving body attains balance it becomes increasingly free to rely on other forces, such as gravity, to support and propel it. This way it conserves its own energy and achieves grace and fluidity of motion.

As well as inducing physical balance, this group of practices develops a balanced mind and a more mature outlook on life. The focus required to perform them with steadiness develops concentration and balance at the emotional, mental and psychic levels. These Asanas are especially noted for balancing the nervous system and removing stress and anxiety. For relief of excessive tension these practices should be held for as long as possible.

Balancing Asanas may be difficult to perform at first if one's sense of balance has not been developed in normal life. However, the body is very adaptable and progress will quickly be made with a few weeks of regular practice. When practicing these Asanas it is most important to steady the mind through concentration on one point. Gazing at a black spot or a mark on the wall while balancing allows the body to maintain seemingly difficult positions for long periods of time.