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# A Role of *Shalabhasana* in Muscles of Back Region

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## ABSTRACT

The *Asana* is traditionally defined as a “comfortable seat”. *Asana* can be used to refer mostly to the physical processes involved in *Yoga*, but it is most commonly used to describe a single pose or position. When the *Asanas* practiced regularly, the body stays healthy, flexible, strong and tough. *Asanas* helps to tone the body and provide strength and flexibility. There are many types of *Asanas*. The *Shalabhasana* is one of the best yoga *Asanas* for strengthening the muscles of back region. It is also known as The Locust Pose. The back muscles movements like shrugging or rotation of shoulder as in swimming, rowing, climbing, pulling, folding the arm behind back etc. *Shalabhasana* helps in these movements.

**Key Words** *Asana, Shalabhasana, Yoga, Movements, Muscles of back*

## INTRODUCTION

In present era, due to inactive lifestyle the risk of musculoskeletal disorders increases. The disorders are mainly due to weakening of muscular network that can lead to excessive load over back, which leads to the back injury, instability of lower extremity, which may lead to atrophy of Para spinal muscles. To prevent these musculoskeletal disorder *Asana* increases the flexibility of the muscles of back and relieves the pain. There are many *Asanas* in existence as there are number of living species in this universe. Lord *Shankar* has described 84 *lacAsanas* in all. Out of these 84 *lacAsanas*, few are favourable and useful for mankind, these are as follows. *Sidhha*, *Bhadra*, *Vajra*, *Simha*, *Vira*, *Mrita*, *Matsya*, *Goraksa*, *Utkata*, *Mayura*, *Kurma*, *UttanaManduka*, *Manduka*, *Vrusha*, *Makara*, *Bhujanga*, *Padma*, *Shalabha*, *Ushtra*,

etc<sup>1</sup>. *Shalabhasana* is a back bending *Asana* that expands the front of the body and strengthens the back of the body. Its name comes from the *SanskritShalabha*, meaning “locust” or “grasshopper” and *Asana*, which means “posture” or “seat”<sup>5</sup>. *Shalabhasana* is said to resemble a locust at rest, all the back bending *Yoga* postures helps to create this physical expression of assurance. The posture actually has the potential to positively and strongly affect on all levels physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual.

The spine gets a smooth elongation in this *Asana*. Except to stretch out and lift legs and hands simultaneously, one needs to have good strength in the upper and middle back.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Steps to practice *Shalabhasana*

It is very important to know the right position of

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**Table 1** Relations of *Shalabhasana* with various factors

Sr. no.	Common name	<i>Shalabhasana</i>
1.	English	Locust pose
2.	Level	Beginner
3.	Position	Prone
4.	Chakra	<i>Manipura</i> (solar plexus), <i>Swadhisthana</i> (sacral chakra), <i>Muladhara</i> (root)
5.	Dosha	<i>Vata,pitta,kapha</i>
6.	Type	Back-band, stretch, strength
7.	Style	<i>Karma yoga</i>
8.	Duration	30 seconds to 2 minute/day
9.	Repetition	3 to 5 times
10.	Stretches	Back, spine, legs
11.	Strengthens	Spine, digestive system , back

the body in *Asana* to avoid any injury and to accomplish the maximum benefits of *Asana*. Here are the few steps to do *Shalabhasana*:

- Lie flat on the stomach with legs and feet together, keep the soles of the feet highest.
- Place the arm under the body or keep them at the sides, choose whichever among these two comforts the most. Keep the hand clenched and the palm downward.
- Slightly stretch the chin in forward direction, rest the chin on the floor throughout the entire practice of this *Asana*.
- Now the starting position – gently closed the eyes, relax the whole body, inhale deeply.
- Slowly start raising the legs as high as possible without straining, keep the leg straight and together.
- Without straining the body, hold the final position for as long as find it at ease.
- Exhale and slowly lower legs on the ground. Come back on starting position. Relax the whole

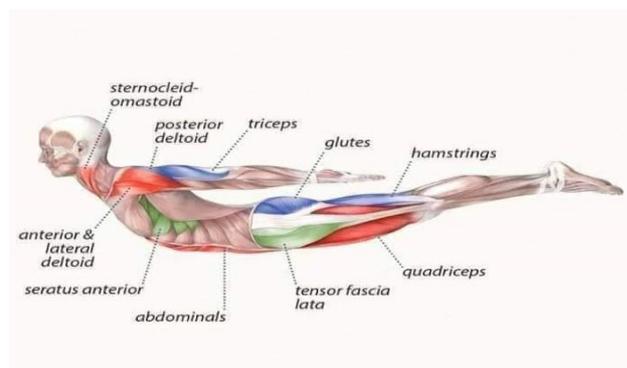
body and turn the head whichever deem comfortable.

- Let the breathing and heartbeat to the normal<sup>2</sup>.

### Variation of *Shalabhasana*

There are 2 types of variation in *Shalabhasana*, *Ardha shalabhasana* and *Makarasan*.

- *Ardha shalabhasana* is an effective approach previous to jump on to the *Purna Shalabhasana*.
- *Makarasan* is also known as the crocodile pose, it can be practiced as variation of *shalabhasana*<sup>5</sup>.



### *Shalabhasana* Benefits

- Practicing this *Asana* increases the strength, power, of back extensor muscles, lower back, and upper back muscles.
- Its regular practiced relieves the pain in muscles of back.
- It provides relief in the case of gastric problems like flatulence, indigestion, etc.
- Avoidance of high blood pressure and heart disease.
- Strengthens spinal cord, and increased lung function.
- It provides flexibility to lower back region.

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➤ This *Asana* has been found useful for relieving sciatica and mild forms of slipped disc.

➤ This *Asana* makes the sexual glands strong, it also helps in bed-wetting and urinary diseases.

➤ It helps in reducing fat around the buttocks and thigh<sup>5</sup>.

### Contraindication of *Shalabhasan*

➤ *Shalabhasana* is avoid in the condition of acute back pain and slip disc.

➤ In condition of pregnancy women should avoid this pose<sup>5</sup>.

### Muscles of the back

There are 3 groups of muscle in back. The superficial and intermediate groups include extrinsic back muscles that make movements and control limb and respiratory movement, respectively.

The deep group includes the true or intrinsic muscles of back that purposely act on the vertebral column, producing its movements and maintain posture.

The superficial extrinsic back muscles Trapezius, Latissimus dorsi, Levator scapulae, and Rhomboid major and minor connect the upper limbs to the trunk and control the movements of limb.

These muscles, although located in the back region. The deep or intrinsic back muscles are innervated by the dorsal rami of spinal nerves and act to maintain posture and manage the movements of the vertebral column. These muscles-extending from the pelvis to the skull

- are enclosed by fascia that attaches medially to the nuchal ligament, the tips of the spinous processes, the supraspinous ligament, and the median crest of the sacrum.

The fascia attaches laterally to the cervical and lumbar transverse processes and to the angles of the ribs.

The thoracic and lumbar parts of the fascia constitute the thoracolumbar fascia, which encloses the deep muscles of the back. It extends laterally from the spinous processes and form a thin covering for the deep muscles in the thoracic region and a strong thick layer for muscles in the lumbar region<sup>3</sup>.

The superficial extrinsic back muscles are trapezius, latissimus dorsi, levator scapulae, rhomboid major and minor. Out of these 5 the trapezius elevates the scapula as in shrugging movement and play an important role in abduction of arm, the latissimus dorsi helps in adduction, extension, and medial rotation of shoulder as in swimming, climbing, pulling, etc. Levator scapulae helps in steadies the scapula bone during movements of arm rhomboid major and minor helps in retract the back<sup>4</sup>.

The deep muscles of the back divided in 3 layer- superficial, intermediate and deep layer. In superficial layer splenius muscle- acting alone, they laterally bend and rotates head to side of active muscle. Acting together, they extend head and neck.

In intermediate layer erector spine muscle bend the vertebral column.

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In deep layer transversospinal muscle stabilize vertebrae throughout local movements of vertebral column.

is very useful in daily routine life. It increases the flexibility of back of human body.

## DISCUSSION

*Shalabhasan* leads to trapezius stretches, it provide elasticity to the latissimus dorsi muscle which helps in climbing or hiking in movement. *Shalabhasan* leads to latissimus dorsi muscle helps in violent expiratory effort like coughing, sneezing etc.

In the position of *shalabhasan* the superficial and deep muscles of the upper back stretches and flexibility will be increases, similarly in the lower half of back also increases the flexibility of these muscles. It also increases the Range of Motion of joint. It also helps to lubricate the joints. *Shalabhasan* improves the bone density, strengthen the bone and prevent the disorder like osteoporosis. This *Asana* increases the stamina and neuromuscular co-ordination. It increases the endurance of muscle.

## CONCLUSION

**स्थिरसुखमासनम् ॥ (पा. यो. सू. साधनपाद 2/46)**

*Asana* is a posture in which an individual may stay and comfortably for a prolong period. It should be performed in slow, steady and rhythmic. *Shalabhasan* effect is felt on the trunk region of the body. Its effect is felt on both superficial as well as deep muscles of back. *Shalabhasan* strengthens the spinal cord. It is beneficial in lower back pain. *Shalabhasan*

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