

**YOGA**  
*To Banish Backache*



## CHAPTER III

Slipped disc or herniated disc is an affliction of the spine, which is the chief cause of back-pain.

It is an extremely distressing condition with pain and

# Slipped Disc

stiffness at the back. In severe cases the patient can barely walk. Medically it needs elaborate, time-consuming and sometimes risky treatments to put the person on his feet again.

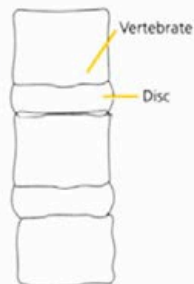
A safe alternative is yoga, which sometimes works like magic. I have seen it with some of my patients. Once a lady from the Swedish Embassy, who was recommended surgery by doctors in her country, came to me for treatment. The first day, she walked in absolutely stiff—like a zombie. On the tenth day—the last day of the course, she had no pain. She surprised even me by coming soon after—may be two three months later—to tell me that she came straight from horse riding!



*Human back-bone*

Understanding the spine is essential to help it heal effectively.

The spine is the sole supporter of our physical frame. It is a column of 30 separate bones called vertebrae, stacked on top of one another and are held together by ligaments. Owing to its loose structure, we can move our body in so many ways, bending it forward, backward, sideways and also twisting. The whole spinal column is kept well aligned because of the support of strong back muscles. In the centre of the vertebrae runs the spinal



cord. Nerves arising from the spinal cord travel through the length and breadth of the body, feeding and gathering messages from every single body part. To keep the vertebrae apart so that there is no pressure on the spinal nerves and no friction between the vertebrae during movements, there are cushions in between them called intervertebral discs.

The discs are filled with a jelly-like substance, which is 80% water. The fluid creates the



*Healthy Disc*

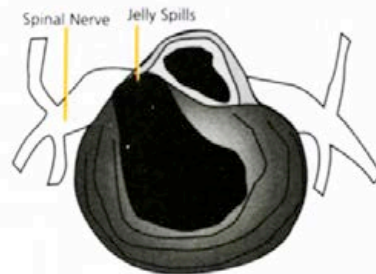
## SLIPPED DISC

pressure necessary to keep the fibres holding them taut.



*Ruptured Disc*

During the day, consequent upon weight bearing, intervertebral discs dehydrate, and at night during rest they rehydrate. Due to various reasons, such as too much weight bearing activities, and too little rest, the discs remain tense and start degenerating. A degenerated disc can rupture when excessive strain is put on it by lifting a heavy object or by a sudden jerk or by an extreme movement. The jelly spills out and impinges on the spinal nerves. Also with the cushioning effect of the discs gone, there is friction between the vertebrae and the flexibility of the spine is lost. All this leads to the pain and stiffness of the back—especially at the lower part, which is the most common site for slipped disc.



*Ruptured Disc*

The following asanas should be taken up after the initial rest. For better result they can be practised twice daily.



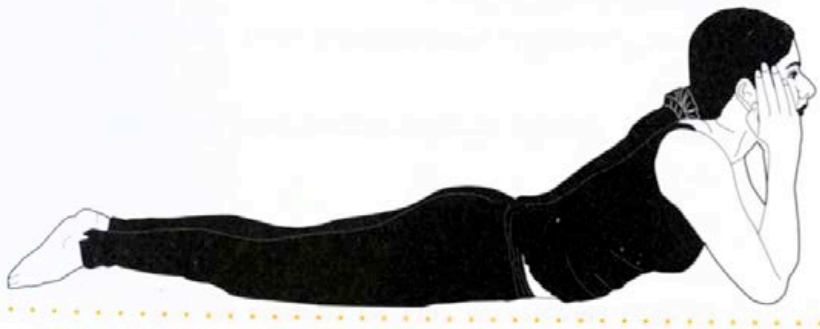
## Tadasana

- ✘ Stand straight with the feet close together.
- ✘ Interlock the fingers and keep hands on the head.
- ✘ Inhaling raise heels and arms with palms facing outwards.
- ✘ Look up and stretch well.
- ✘ Hold the posture for a few moments.
- ✘ Exhaling return to the starting position.
- ✘ Repeat 10 times.



## Makarasana

- ✘ An excellent asana to prevent and cure all back ailments. It can be done at any time for any duration. Everybody should practise makarasana for 5 to 10 minutes twice or thrice daily.
- ✘ Lie face down on the floor or bed (the mattress should be hard).
- ✘ Prop yourself up keeping the hands under your chin for support.
- ✘ Adjust the position of the elbows to ensure that the pressure is felt at the midback and not on the lower back.





## Shavasana

(To free the neck)

- ✿ Lie down horizontally on the bed with your head near the edge.
- ✿ Slowly slide upward making the head free from the bed. The head should hang down.
- ✿ Hold this position for 10 seconds; then return the head on to the bed.
- ✿ Repeat 5 times.





### Shashankasana

- ✦ Sit in Vajrasana
- ✦ Raise arm up above your head.
- ✦ Exhaling, bend forward quickly and place forehead and the forearms on the floor.
- ✦ Relax and breathe naturally.
- ✦ Starting with 10 breaths in the final position gradually increase it to 100 (5 minutes or more)
- ✦ It is important to rest the forehead on the floor. If your body is stiff and does not bend properly, you may lift your hips up or sit on a cushion. If your forehead still does not reach the floor, keep a book under your forehead. If your stomach comes in the way, you may move your knees apart while keeping the feet joined.

