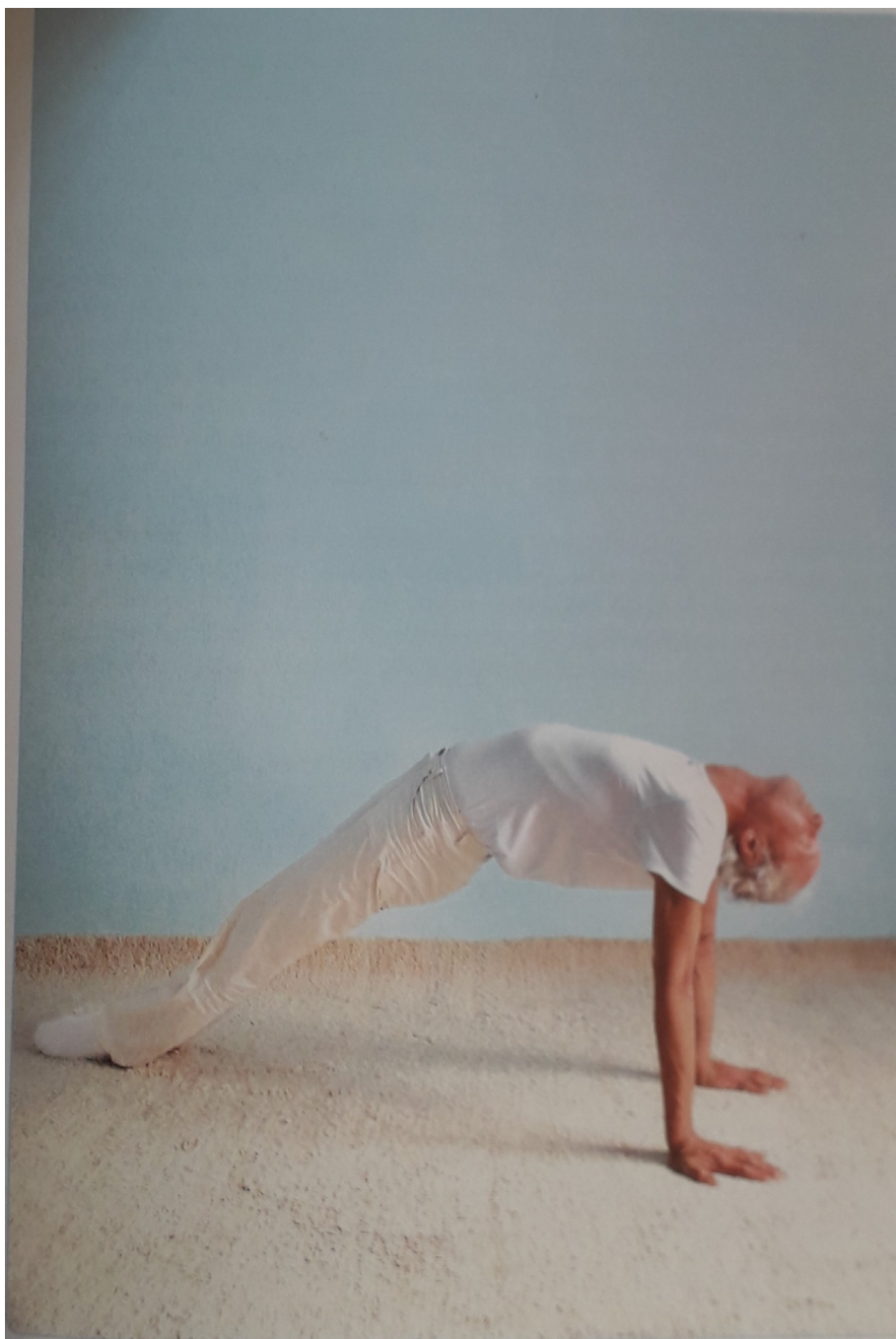


The inclined plane
purvottanasana



For the inclined plane, *purvottanasana*, take a sitting position with straightened legs. The palms of the hands are placed on the floor behind you, close to your back. Actively stretch through your upper spine. Your chest is opened far forwards. The breathing remains free in its rhythm and its movement in spite of the physical effort. Support yourself on your arms and lift up your body. Form your chest further into the arch, hold for as long as possible, then return again to the sitting position. (See picture)

With this exercise you can carry out some strong exertion, feel your thoracic spine and mobilise the individual sections of your spine better. Do the movement a second time, heightening the tension and once again stretch the chest in a systematic and concentrated way into a conscious rounding. By doing the movement in a focused

and decisive way, the spine becomes stretched through the region between the shoulderblades. The farther you stretch, the more breath-exertion is demanded.

The body forms an inclined plane in the position. This is also the name of this position. In Sanskrit *purvottanasana* means "intensive stretch of the East", as the front of the body is associated with the East. If you find this movement easy you can press the soles of your feet flat onto the floor and aim to stretch as far as possible into the chest region.

The inclined plane strengthens the back, the shoulders and the arms and, when it is held for longer,

the whole organism. The noticeable permeation with warmth happens through the active stimulation of the metabolism, which occurs quite particularly with longer holding times. Because of this strong stimulation of the metabolism, which occurs through the exercise, the protein taken in is better utilised and in general less residue accrues.

At the end of the inclined plane take a sitting position again with straightened legs, take your arms far above your head and from the middle part of your back stretch your body upwards and bending backwards into the greatest possible extension. Strength can and must be actively applied from the middle part of the back. This concluding movement once again increases the spine's dynamic strength and activates the breath-dynamic into the vertical plane. As a variation, one hand can be placed on the ground and the other arm can be stretched far upwards from the middle part of the back. (Drawing).



Actually the character of this exercise seems quite rigid. However, if practitioners apply a lively impetus, it gains a very dynamic character, and it can even happen that in spite of the effort demanded by the physical engagement, it gives joy.

In any case, do not choose to make the body into the dominant reality, but enter into the joy of the active engagement.