Anatomy of Hatha Yoga: A Manual for Students, Teachers, and Practitioners
by H. David Coulter

Anatomy of Hatha Yoga is the only modern authoritative source that correlates the study of hatha yoga with anatomy and physiology. Hatha yoga is comprised of stretching, strengthening and breathing exercises in upright, lying down and inverted postures. Yoga teachers and students, personal trainers, medical therapists, or anyone who is curious or troubled about how the body responds to stretching and exercise will find in this book a cornucopia -- partly new and partly old -- of readable and reliable information. It was written and edited to meet the needs of a general audience largely unschooled in the biomechanical sciences, and yet to attract and challenge the interests of the medical profession. This book features 230 black and white photographs and more than 120 diagrams and anatomical illustrations. Chapter 1 summarizes general principles of anatomy and physiology as applied to hatha yoga. Breathing is next in chapter 2 because yogic breathing expedites movement and posture. Breathing is followed by pelvic and abdominal exercises in chapter 3 because the pelvis and abdomen form the foundation of the body. Standing postures will then be covered in chapter 4 because these poses are so important for beginning students, and because they provide a preview of backbending, forward bending, and twisting postures, which are covered in detail in chapters 5, 6, and 7. The headstand and shoulderstand, including an introduction to cardiovascular function, are presented in chapters 8 and 9. Postures for relaxation and meditation are treated last in chapter 10. WINNER, 2002 Benjamin Franklin Award for Health Wellness, and Nutrition - Publishers Marketing Association.

The first few chapters of this book describe in excruciating detail of nerves and breathing. This is pretty daunting, but I'm sure its worthwhile for anyone with the patience. Later chapters focus on one type of yoga move (e.g., twists), and convey precise details on how each of the most common yoga moves is supposed to be performed: what to do, what not to do, how to modify the posture when beginning and inflexible, and how to change the posture as you improve. I found the details on the various standing with legs spread poses to be incredibly helpful -- which way are your hips and feet really supposed to be facing?
Well worth the money. Fascinating reading. I wish more postures were described.

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