



Dear Friend,

Thank you for enrolling for the Yoga course from Makara Jyothi Online (<http://www.makarajyothi.com>).

It has been a pleasure to design and develop this Yoga course. This is a basic introductory course in Yoga made especially for people who lead busy lives. I sincerely hope that you will find this course useful and easy to follow. You are welcome to give your feedback so that I can improve the courses.

This course is not designed to be a mail and forget course. Feel free to contact me at sridhar.raamalingam@makarajyothi.com with your questions and comments.

Due to certain personal pre-occupations, I had to delay the launch of the courses. Sorry for the inconvenience.

Thanks and have a nice day.

Warm regards,

Administrator

Makara Jyothi Online

Yoga for beginners



<http://www.makarajyothi.com>

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Introduction

Yoga is a holistic discipline - covering the body, mind and the spirit. Traditionally, yoga is defined as being derived from the Sanskrit root “YUG” meaning to fuse or combine. Since Yoga is not just a physical regimen but aims at spiritual development as well, many Yoga teachers define “Yoga” to mean to combine the “Self” with the “Supreme Self”. However, to better our understanding, we will study Yoga in the context of everyday living and then slowly shift focus to that of spiritual development and self knowledge.

Given this as the background, Yoga is integrating or fusing what we “think”, “feel” and “do”. In short - bringing “Thinking, Feeling and Acting” in sync with one another. This is the first step though. Before we start our Yoga regimen, there are a few things that we may need to follow so to say, general directions for practicing Yoga.

General Directions for Yogasana

1. A glass of fresh water should be taken before performing the asanas.
2. Stomach should be empty. Asanas can be performed 8 hours after a meal, 2 hours after a glass of milk and one hour after eating fruit.
3. Always perform asanas early in the morning. If this is not possible, the next best time would be evening around dusk.
4. Rich, left-over, very dry or hot, or too much food should be avoided.
5. Force or pressure should not be used while performing asanas.
6. One must not go out in the cold after performing asanas.
7. Lower the head and other parts of the body slowly; in particular, raised heels should be lowered slowly.
8. The breathing should be controlled and should always be through the nose. The benefits of asanas increase if pranayama is performed simultaneously.
9. If the body is stressed, perform **Shavasana** (given later).
10. Asanas should be performed in a well-lit, clean and ventilated room. The atmosphere should be peaceful.
11. Yogasanas, especially inverted poses, are to be avoided during menstruation.
12. Do not perform yogasanas during pregnancy.
13. Do not perform yogasanas the night after having sex.
14. People suffering from Epilepsy, Heart ailments, Blood pressure and other chronic illness must consult their doctor before practicing Yogasana.

Important Note: Please consult your medical practitioner(s) about the suitability of Yoga for you.

The Eight limbs of Yoga

Yoga as we will study in this course is derived from Ashtanga yoga. Ashtanga Yoga is a holistic practice consisting of mental discipline and physical exercises. Ashtanga means “Eight limbs” and Ashtanga Yoga means “The Eight limbed Yoga”. The eight limbs of yoga are:

1. Yama or Abstentions
2. Niyama or Observances
3. Asana (Postures or the Exercises)
4. Pranayama (Breath control)
5. Pratyahara (Withdrawal from sense objects)
6. Dharana (Focus)
7. Dhyana (Meditation) and
8. Samadhi (Equanimity)

Sage Patanjali in his Yoga sutras specifies five Yamas and Niyamas:

Yama 1 - Ahimsa

Nonviolence; Abstinence from injury, or harm to any living creature in thought, word, or deed. This is the "main" Yama.

Yama 2 - Satya

Truthfulness in word and thought (in conformity with the facts).

Yama 3 - Asteya

No stealing, no coveting, no entering into debt.

Yama 4 - Brahmacharya

Divine conduct, continence, celibate when single, faithful when married.

Yama 5 - Aparagriha

Abstinence from Avarice.

Niyama 1 - Shaucha

Purity, avoidance of impurity in body, mind and speech.

Niyama 2 - Santosha

Contentment

Niyama 3 - Tapas

Austere living

Niyama 4 - Svadhyaya

Study

Niyama 4 - Ishvara-pranidhana

Surrender to God

To derive the maximum benefit, a person practicing yoga should observe all the Yamas and Niyamas.

Before you start Yoga - Cleansing your body

1. Before you start performing Yogasanas, you need to cleanse your body of any toxins. The procedure is simple.
 - a. Every night before you go to bed, fill a copper vessel (around 1000ml) with drinking water and leave it overnight.
 - b. Drink this water the first thing in the morning after you brush your teeth.
 - c. **Nadi Shodhana Pranayama or the Cleansing Breath:**
 - i. Sit in a comfortable position with your back and head erect.
 - ii. Close your right nostril with your right index finger and Inhale deeply and slowly through your left nostril.
 - iii. Once you complete your inhalation, close the left nostril with your left index finger and exhale slowly and steadily through your right nostril.
 - iv. After complete exhalation inhale steadily, deeply and slowly through your right nostril and exhale through your left nostril. This completes one cycle.
 - v. Starting with 9 rounds practice and increase the number of rounds to 27. This breath helps to cleanse your body.
 - d. Avoid consuming food which is pungent and spicy. Also, avoid drinking cold drinks after having a warm or hot meal.
 - e. Avoid intoxicants including Coffee, Tea and Cigarettes.
 - f. Drink 1000ml of water (stored in the copper vessel) before you go to bed.
 - g. Do these for **21 days** before you start your Yogasana practice.
2. Start your Yogasana practice from the **22nd Day**.
3. Perform your Yogasanas early in the morning between 5:00am and 06:00am.
4. Yogasanas must be performed in a well ventilated room. The room must not be excessively hot or cold.
5. Always start and end your Yogasana practice with Shavasana.

Surya Namaskara

Most yoga teachers will call this sequence of asanas as The Sun Salutation. However, this sequence of asanas activates the “Surya” nadi or the nerve - which according to Yoga is an invisible nerve point that runs along the Spinal column. These sequences activate this nerve centre.

Surya Namaskara - Benefits

Surya Namakara gives an almost uncountable number of benefits, which cannot be attributed to any one position but are the result of the whole practice.

Surya namaskara has a very powerful influence on all the system of the body: endocrinal, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, etc. and helps bring them into balance with one another.

During the practice of surya namaskaraa all the major muscles are exercised in a complete way. Daily practice of this exercise keeps the whole body healthy and removes excess fat. It revitalizes the body and mind and makes the thinking sharper.

All the abdominal organs are alternately stretched and compressed. This ensures that the organs function correctly. If they do not work efficiently at present, it encourages them to do so.

Many people do not breathe properly. Synchronization of the breath with the physical movement during surya namaskara ensures the practitioner, at least for a few minutes daily, breathes deeply and rhythmically as they should. This removes stagnant, germ filled air from the lungs and replaces it with health giving, oxygen rich air. Increased mental clarity is brought about by the influx of fresh, oxidized blood to the brain.

Perspiration is a vital function since it is one of the body’s methods of eliminating impurities. If people do not get enough physical exercise to ‘work up a sweat’, these impurities remain inside the body and cause or aggravate disease, or atleast skin problems. Surya namaskara rectifies this and gives a radiant complexion to those plagued with boils and pimples.

Many people in this fast paced modern world suffer from nervous problems. There is no better way to remove nervous tension, stress and anxiety than by regularly doing surya

namaskara. The movements gently massage the nervous connections throughout the whole body, allowing them to relax and become revitalized.

To summarize, Surya Namaskara is the ideal exercise to bestow good health.

Surya Namaskara - Precautions and Limitations

The practice of surya namaskara should be immediately discontinued if a fever develops due to excess toxins in the body. The practitioner should not do more rounds than he can comfortably perform without excessive physical fatigue.

There are no age limits regarding the practice of surya namaskara; both old and the young can perform it. Ladies, however, should not do this practice during the menstrual cycle or after the fourth month of pregnancy.

Surya Namaskara - The Schedule

Week	Schedule
Weeks 1 to 3	Cleansing
Week 4	Cleansing + 3 rounds of Surya namaskara
Week 5	Cleansing + 5 rounds of Surya namaskara
Week 6	Cleansing + 9 rounds of Surya namaskara
Week 7	Cleansing + 18 rounds of Surya namaskara
Week 8 onwards	Cleansing + 27 rounds of Surya namaskara

Surya Namaskara - Asanas

One complete round of Surya namaskara consists of the following positions:

1. Shavasana
2. Pranamasana
3. Hasta Uttanasana
4. Padahastanasana
5. Ashwa Sanchalanasana (right leg back)
6. Parvatasana

7. Ashtanga Namaskara
8. Bhujangasana
9. Parvatasana
10. Ashwa Sanchalanasana (left leg back)
11. Padahastanasana
12. Hasta Uttanasana
13. Pranamasana
14. Hasta Uttanasana
15. Padahastanasana
16. Ashwa Sanchalanasana (right leg back)
17. Parvatasana
18. Ashtanga Namaskara
19. Bhujangasana
20. Parvatasana
21. Ashwa Sanchalanasana (left leg back)
22. Padahastanasana
23. Hasta Uttanasana
24. Pranamasana
25. Shavasana

Surya Namaskara - Shavasana

1. Lie flat on the back with the arms beside and in line with the body, palms facing upward.
2. Move the feet slightly apart to a comfortable position and close the eyes.
3. Relax the whole body. Do not move any part even if discomfort occurs.
4. Let the breath become rhythmic and natural.
5. Become aware of the inhalation and exhalation.
6. Count the number of respirations: 1 in, 1 out, and so on. Continue to count for 5 minutes. If the mind starts to wander bring it back to the counting. If you can keep the mind on the breath for a few minutes, the mind and body will relax.

Surya Namaskara - Pranamasana



1. Stand erect with the feet together.
2. Place the palms together in front of the chest.
3. Relax the whole body.
4. Breathe normally.

Surya Namaskara - Hasta Uttanasana



1. As you inhale, raise both arms above the head.
2. Keep the arms separated by one shoulder's width.
3. Bend the head and upper trunk as far back as you can.

Surya Namaskara - Pada Hasta asana



1. As you exhale, bend forward until the fingers or hands touch the ground on either side or in front of the feet.
2. Try to touch the knees with the forehead.
3. Do not strain.
4. Keep the legs straight, without bending at the knees.

Surya Namaskara - Ashwa Sanchalanasana



1. As you inhale, stretch the right leg back as far as possible.
2. At the same time bend the left leg but keep the left foot in the same position.
3. The arms should remain straight in the same position.
4. In the final position the weight of the body should be supported on the two hands, the left foot, the right knee and the toes of the right foot.
5. The head should be tilted backwards, the back arched and the gaze directed upwards.

Surya Namaskara - Parvata asana



1. As you exhale, straighten the left leg and place the left foot beside the right foot.
2. Raise the buttocks in the air and lower the head so that it lies between the two arms, the body should form two sides of a triangle.

3. The legs and arms should be straight in the final position.
4. Try to keep the heels in contact with the ground in this pose.

Surya Namaskara - Ashtanga namaskara



1. Exhale and hold your breath, lower the body to the ground so that in the final position only the toes of feet, the two knees, the chest, the hands and the chin touch the ground. The hips and abdomen should be raised slightly off the ground.

Surya Namaskara - Bhujanga asana



1. As you inhale, raise the body from the waist by straightening the arms.
2. Bend the head backward.
3. This stage is the same as the final position of bhujangasana.

Conclusion

This preliminary practice of Yoga, if done, properly, will yield innumerable number of benefits as outlined above. Most of all you will find that it helps you remain energetic, cheerful apart from being able to think and work clearly.

Hope you benefit from the timeless wisdom of Yoga.