

# The Resonance *of Unity*



Holistic Hatha YTT Manual



om sahana vavatu  
saha nau bhunaktu  
saha viryam karavavahai  
tejasvi navadhitamastu ma vidvishavahai  
om shantih shantih shantih

*Om, May the teacher and the student be paved on the path of Study together,  
May the teacher and the student relish their studies together,  
May the student and teacher study with deep concentration together,  
Let what we study be full of brilliance;  
May it not give rise to separation because of ignorance,  
Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*

## Yogi's Call

Yogis of India  
 With each offering you call  
 Remembering the Nature spirits  
 Who nourish and sustain us all.  
  
 Meditating upon a Kingdom vast  
 Within and beyond the Mind  
 Hearts attuned to the Creators song  
 Dancing to the rhythm of cosmic time.  
  
 You celebrate the Secret  
 for which the wise will die in life  
 Liberation from illusions bondage  
 Freed by Truth's most holy knife.  
  
 Magicians cast spells to show their power  
 Your purpose is to display something  
 more:  
 To give homage to the ancestors past  
 And re-enact our sacred lore.  
  
 Both rhyme and reason merge  
 When your mantras speak in sacred verse  
 Reminding us of the sadhana's  
 That bridge heaven with the earth.  
  
 You teach how the elements of life  
 Are within our conscious control  
 If we but yoke our minds  
 To the knowledge of the Soul.

A code of conduct  
 Once ruled your sacred band  
  
 Of yogi's, mystics and sages  
 Who traveled Bharat's holy lands.  
 You moved as spiritual cells  
 Throughout the human race  
  
 Bringing healing, energy and secret  
 knowledge  
 Transcending both time and space.  
 Oh Yogi's of the past  
 Wherefore art thou today  
  
 When the world is out of balance  
 And seeks return to the sacred ways.  
 We need your noble purpose  
 The sacrifice you incarnated to give  
  
 The symbol you embody  
 Of the enlightened life we came to live.  
  
 Matte your locks with the braids of truth  
 Echoing the Guru's message through the  
 halls of time:  
 Awaken Children to the Cosmic One  
 This entire play is the writ Divine!

~ Zamir

## What is Yoga

Yoga is one of the oldest and is the fastest mind-body practices growing on the planet today. On the surface level, yoga is a physical practice that helps us to gain more strength, flexibility and mental relaxation. Going deeper into the origins of yoga, we find that it is a science of self-realization.

In this yoga teacher training program, we are focused on the experience of yoga, which we are referring to the Resonance of Unity. In its essence, yoga is a path, a practice and a goal. The path of yoga is determined by the practice and its intended goal.

Such practices not only include asana but also ritual, pranayama, mantra, kirtan, contemplation and meditation - all with the intent of developing higher consciousness. Since every human is unique in terms of karma, different yogic paths will be more suitable and appealing according to their disposition (known as svabhava).

In this training we expose you to various paths and practices of yoga so that you can catch the feeling of them and pursue them in greater depth over the course of your life. Our primary focus is on Hatha and Raja Yoga, with the support of Naad Yoga and Somatic Psychology, to lead you into the resonance of unity - the experience of the wordless, interconnected reality that unites all life and manifests as truth, goodness and beauty.

## The Five Primary Paths of Yoga

### **Jnana Yoga (The Yoga of Knowledge)**

Self-realization through 'gnosis', or inner knowledge and insight.

### **Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of Devotion)**

Self-realization through devotion or divine love

### **Karma Yoga (Yoga of Service)**

Self-realization through selfless work and sacred ritual

### **Raja Yoga (Royal Yoga)**

Self-realization through a combination of knowledge, devotion and work

### **Hatha Yoga (Yoga of the Body-Mind)**

Self-realization through a combination of asana, pranayama, mantra and meditation practices

*“[Yoga] is a tradition that aims at the integration of all our faculties into a cosmic higher awareness. It includes whatever helps us do this. We could say that yoga is the religion of nature, life and consciousness beyond outer labels. All creatures in all worlds will discover some form of yoga in their quest for higher consciousness.”*

– Dr. David Frawley

## Our Approach

The goal of TRU Yoga is to establish The Resonance of Unity. Through this exploration, we glimpse a state of wholeness and learn to become established in it. This experiential state - where body, mind, emotions and energy are in harmony with the whole - is the aim of yogic practices. It is the experience of a still mind, where the silence and bliss of existence are naturally opened to the practitioner. TRU yoga leads the aspirant to the inner dimension of the soul, the source of fulfillment beyond desire.

Freedom from ignorance is the outcome of yoga. True knowledge, in the highest sense of the word, is spontaneously and progressively realized through a systematic practice of ethical living, disciplined effort, contemplation of primordial teachings, meditation, prayer and devotional surrender. The spiritual systems of classical yoga, in conjunction with the dharma teachings of other religious mystics, provide the foundation for exploring the resonance of unity. Spiritual realization is a gift for which we can prepare ourselves to receive through the path of yoga.

Contemporary scientific knowledge and psycho-somatic modalities for healing and creativity are also aids for preparing the body and mind for the deeper states explored in yoga. When used in conjunction with the classical arts and spiritual sciences, a holistic approach to well-being is available to the modern seeker.

We are spiritual beings having a physical experience. What does this mean? The body and mind are vehicles that are gifted to us from the Divine consciousness for the purpose of self-realization (awakening to our inherent Divinity) and fulfilling our destiny. This is the evolutionary aspect of consciousness unfolding in time and space.

## Quantum Activism

A unique aspect of TRU Yoga is that it draws upon the discoveries of modern science to both validate and deepen our understanding and application of the yogic knowledge. Developments in quantum physics, biology and neuroscience have now made it possible to see the workings of the human body, mind and the universe as whole on a microcosmic scale. There is a vast array of evidence and studies that can be drawn upon to aid the grasp of subtle concepts in yogic sciences, and help us to apply them with greater precision and awareness in our lives and practice.

Yoga can become a form of activism when we understand the inner workings of memory, energy and non-local fields. As we turn our creativity inwards through our sadhana, we are reshaping our genetics in a way that interfaces with the morphogenetic fields. These fields are non-local and contain the contributions of the genetic uploads of our familial lineages and social fields. The fundamental notion is that our individual evolution is not separate from the whole, through changing our state of consciousness we are contributing to the overall possibility for others to access more evolved states.

This simple fact places a tremendous creative responsibility on each person to fulfill their potential and to reshape their body, mind and emotions to contribute to a more resonant morphogenetic field for the whole.

*“Love prevents you from renouncing life, and awareness will help you be in the world yet not be of the world.”*

- Osho

Chapter 1

# **Yoga Philosophy**

# The Classical Paths of Yoga

“Our main problem is to be free. It is evident then that until we realise ourselves as the Absolute, we cannot attain to deliverance. Yet there are various ways of attaining to this realisation. These methods have the generic name of Yoga (to join, to join ourselves to our reality).

These Yogas, though divided into various groups, can principally be classed into four; and as each is only a method leading indirectly to the realisation of the Absolute, they are suited to different temperaments.

Now it must be remembered that it is not that the assumed man becomes the real man or Absolute. There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect; but the ignorance that has covered Its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the Âtman to restore its own nature.

*”The chief helps in this liberation are Abhyâsa and Vairâgya. Vairagya is non-attachment to life, because it is the will to enjoy that brings all this bondage in its train; and Abhyasa is constant practice of any one of the Yogas.”*

*”Never say ‘No’ never say “I cannot”, for you are infinite. All the power is within you. You can do anything.”*

Swami Vivekananda



In the bhagavad gita, or the “Song of the Divine”, Sri Krishna elucidates the 4 paths of yoga to the warrior Arjuna. The choice of Arjuna as the protagonist of this text is a meaningful one, as he is a man of action. Trained in the arts of war, his body and mind has been disciplined to develop courage and concentration, righteousness and respect for the laws of society.

However, on the precipice of engaging in battle he is wrought by indecision and self-doubt. For the enemy he is poised to fight is none other than his relatives and teachers that he grew up with. In some way, he is being asked to fight against himself - for what we identify with we take on as part of ourselves.

In this moment he turns to Sr Krishna, the Divine Being incarnated on earth to fulfill this great 'leela', or play, in order to provide instruction to humanity and help to bend the arc of destiny towards dharma, or truthful conduct in harmony with universal laws.

Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna that his dharma as a warrior is to fight, and to free him of the identifications that bind him, Sri Krishna expounds the art and science of yoga - laid out in 4 paths.

The context of these yoga's is to establish one in the state of "Union", the root meaning of the word yoga, which is "to join". It shares the Latin root of the word 'religion', or "religare", which means 'to bind'. Ultimately, Krishna is revealing Arjuna a spiritual solution to his earthly dilemma.

Each of these yogas corresponds to the archetypal predispositions we find amongst human beings. The composition of these predispositions inform our 'Svabhava', or our essential character, which is our karmic tendencies that make us more suitable for certain types of yoga. Jnana yoga is more appealing to those of philosophical nature; Raja Yoga for those of a scientific nature; Karma yoga for those who are service and action oriented; Bhakti Yoga for those who are more emotive and yearning for surrender.

In Arjuna, he sees one who has the capacity to practice all of these yogas - so it's important to note that we do not have to fit in just one label. That being said, the instruction on each yoga is complete as its own unique path with its own views and practices, ultimately leading towards the same fruit - Self-realization.

*"All life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature attempting to realize her perfection in an ever increasing expression of her potentialities and to unite herself with her own Divine reality".*

– Sri Aurobindo

If we see ourselves as an expression of both the diversity and intelligence of Nature, it is clear that the basis of life is a progressive journey of evolution to higher degrees of order and complexity. The universe is a symphony of energies moving in an exquisite dance of chaos and order, unfolding in fractal patterns that give rise to infinite expression of life amidst a field of underlying unity.

The simultaneous union with this field of cosmic consciousness, while being an agent of action in this world in co-participation with this unifying intelligence, is the aim of our yoga. It fulfills our needs for both individuality and unity beyond duality, and ultimately, according to the promise of Sr Krishna, releases us from the bondage of dualistic perception.

## The Yogic Paths

- **Raja Yoga: The Royal Path**

Raja yoga is a path of mastering the mind. Through self-discipline, introspection and devotion, the practitioner learns to still the fluctuations of the mind through ethical living, physical and mental practices for self-regulation, and higher knowledge for self-realization.

- **Bhakti Yoga: The Yoga of Devotion**

Bhakti Yoga focuses on cultivating devotion to the Divine such as beloved-lover, friend-friend, parent-child, and master-servant, with an attitude of unconditional love. Seeing the Divine in all, cultivating acceptance and peace.

- **Karma Yoga: The Yoga of Action**

Karma Yoga is the path of selfless service. Through action undertaken without agendas for personal benefit, the psyche is purified and the virtues of Divine consciousness take root in the practitioner.

- **Jnana Yoga: The Yoga of Knowledge**

Jnana Yoga is the path of transcendent knowledge - that which is eternally true. The practitioner continuously inquires in the nature of reality to discern the real from the unreal, and establish themselves with unshakable primordial wisdom.

Included in the Major Branches of Yoga:

- **Hatha Yoga: The Yoga of Physical Purification**

Hatha Yoga focuses on purification of the body for awakening spiritual life.

Ha-tha = ha-sun, tha-moon, and represents opposing energies: male and female, positive and negative energies, yin/yang. Techniques bring us into balance, and can awaken the spiritual energy of kundalini.

*“Hatha Yoga teaches us to use the body as the bow, asana as the arrow, and the soul – the target.”*

– BKS Iyengar

## Principles of Karma Yoga

*“Because you have free will, you cannot control your actions, but you are never in control of the fruit or ultimate outcome of what you do. Therefore, never let attachment to the fruits be the ultimate reason of your actions. Conversely, do not simply retreat into a state of detached inaction.....Instead, perform all your actions in a state of yogic awareness, without attachment to result...it is said that such a balanced consciousness is called karma yoga.”*

– Gita 2.47-48

### Right Attitude

It's not what you do that counts, it's the attitude while doing it that determines if a job is a karma yoga job, ie. liberating...or binding. Work is worship. Swami Sivananda advises us to “give your hands to work, and keep your mind fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord.”

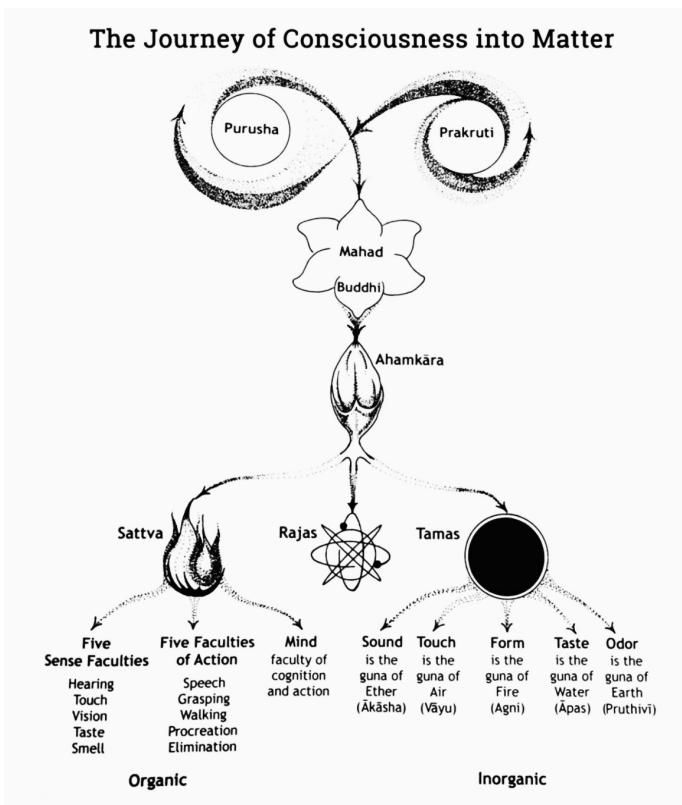
### Right Motive

Same as attitude, it is not what you do that counts but your real motive behind it. Your motive must be pure. “Man generally plans to get the fruits of his works before he starts any kind of work. The mind is so framed that it cannot think of any kind of work without remuneration or reward. A selfish man cannot do any service. He will weigh the work and the money in balance. Selfless Service is unknown to him,”

### Do Your Duty

Often “duty” is referred to as “righteousness”. You will incur demerit if you shun your duty. Your duty is towards God, or Self, or the Inner Teacher who teaches you through all the specific circumstances of your life as they appear.

# Samkhya Philosophy



*“One who is permanently linked to the buddhi faculty goes beyond the relativity of sukha and dukha as the determiner of what they do. Therefore, connect with your atma through yoga, and that yoga will restore harmony and balance to all your actions”*

– *Gita 2.50*

*“When your buddhi remains steady and unwavering in meditation upon your atma ‘true self’, you will no longer be distracted by the details of rituals. Then, absorbed in samadhi, you will directly perceive your true nature and achieve perfection in buddhi yoga.”*

– *Gita 2.53*

Classical yoga is rooted in “samkyha philosophy”, which is one of the world’s oldest metaphysical worldviews and philosophies of spiritual liberation. It is called a darshana, which can mean a vision of the Ultimate Reality.

It views life as consisting of the interaction between two eternal principles; Purusha - Self, Consciousness, Spirit, and Prakriti - matter, primordial Nature. The intermingling of purusha and prakriti produces the impetus for all creation. All humanity has seen that life is produced when the Male and Female, or Father and Mother, are joined. When these realities unite they produce entities imbued with life-force, known as “Jiva”.

In the religious view, the purpose of each jiva is to evolve until it realizes its true nature. Each jiva has a place in the overall evolutionary scheme of life, called a sva-dharma. It also

has a unique disposition determined by the balance of elements that comprise it, called a sva-bhava.

In Samkhya there is no “God” that is masterminding all of creation. There are universal design principles in nature which, when animated by consciousness, begin to produce the entire diversity of life. It’s amazing how the ancients understood that the entire universe is essentially made of holons, or wholes within wholes, each endowed with the potential to evolve different variations of the same underlying patterns of nature. Human beings are a unique species as they have both the animal and superconscious intelligence available to them.

Samkyha philosophy reveals an emergent metaphysics in which progressive development of the subtle and gross apparatus that has evolved for consciousness and nature to perceive and create reality. All the principles of creation, known as the tattwas, are the evolutes of prakriti - with which life continues to generate its infinite manifestations. Of particular importance are the three modes of nature, or gunas, which are in a constant interplay to produce the various physical and psychological states of existence.

The premise of samkyha is that by providing a map of consciousness, each person can perform their own investigation to discover how the mechanism of mind and nature works within themselves. When we hear a statement like “all life is an illusion”, this is a statement made by yogis who have performed such an investigation.

Life is an illusion because of its constantly changing nature, based on underlying principles that create endless differentiations that appear separate on the surface. Just as a movie takes place on a screen and then ends when the reel is done and the light is turned off, so it is for our own minds. When we meditate and observe life carefully, we begin to see how the mechanism works.

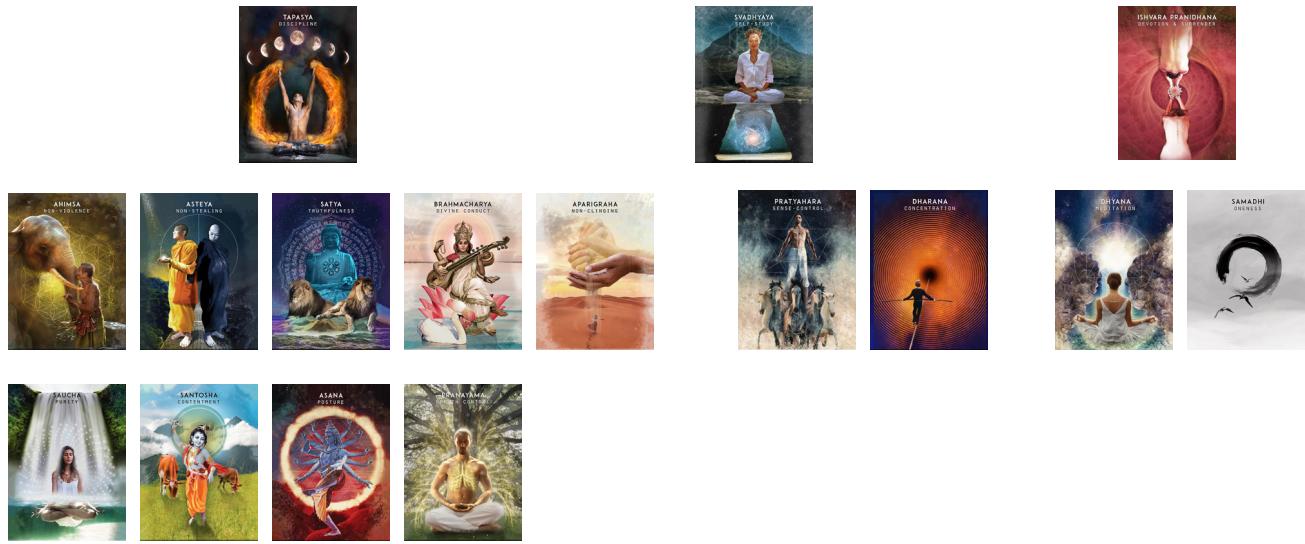
Patanjali’s yoga is sometimes called samkyha yoga, as it can empower one to experience purusha and prakriti as two independent and ultimate realities. To be established in this state of discriminative wisdom is known as kaivalya, or liberation. Emancipation from what? Ignorance, which is the cause of suffering. In the ultimate possibility, it is liberation from the cycle of birth and death itself.

Viewing the basic cause of suffering as ignorance (avidya), both samkhya and yoga deals directly with the causes of ignorance to achieve its goal of freedom. The root of ignorance is a basic amnesia that all life undergoes by identifying with its material experience - in yoga this is the mistaking of the observer with the observed, or in samkyha of Purusha with the manifestations of Prakriti.

Whereas samkyha is inherently a dualistic philosophy, in many other yogic paths there is only One underlying Reality and it cannot be divided. Patanjali does not speak strongly for one or the other, according to him if our devotion or surrender to God/Void/Self brings us to samadhi, it is valid - no one else can coerce us into the conclusion of our Ultimate nature.

While samkyha philosophy provides an excellent blueprint, Patanjali offers deep insight into how it operates within the human mind and practical guidance on working with it. His penetrating clarity into the nature of the mind, the progressive stages of yogic development, as well as the obstacles that arise from the practitioner are an invaluable asset to a seeker.

## Kriya Yoga



Bahigara (Outer Limbs)  
**KARMA YOGA**  
*Path of Action*

Antaranga  
**JNANA MARGA**  
*Path of Knowledge*

Antaranga  
**BHAKTI MARGA**  
*Path of Devotion*

In the yoga sutras, Patanjali presents the anatomy of yoga practice (sadhana) as 'kriya yoga'. Kriya means "inner action", which means it is something that you do on the inside. Contrary to modern mainstream presentations of yoga, true yoga practice is mostly invisible to others although most of us can intuit when someone has a genuine practice. For Patanjali, kriya yoga is comprised of three interlocking aspects of practice; discipline (tapasya), self-study (svadhyaya), and devotion (ishvara pranidhana). **This trinity, according to Patanjali, comprises the essential process of yoga.**

Kriya yoga is an integrated approach to yoga that addresses the five primary afflictions (kleshas) of the mind: ignorance, ego, attachment, aversion, and fear. Approached with the right attitude, these universal afflictions provide the base material for the alchemical work on the inner path with the help of yogic practice.

CHAPTER II

# **Soma & Psyche**

What If?

What if our religion was each other?

If our practice was our life?

If prayer was our words?

What if the Temple was the Earth?

If forests were our church?

If holy water—the rivers, lakes and oceans?

What if meditation was our relationships?

If the Teacher was life?

If wisdom was self-knowledge?

If love was the center of our being?

- Ganga White

# Introduction

In our journey through yoga, we discover more than just physical postures and breath-work; we unearth profound connections between the body and the mind. Drawing upon the rich tapestry of somatic psychology, we delve into the depths of our being, exploring the intricate interplay between soma and psyche.

## Exploring the Body-Mind Connection

Somatic psychotherapy offers us invaluable tools to deepen our awareness of the body-mind connection. For instance, practices such as body scanning meditation help us to tune into the sensations and feelings present in different parts of the body, thus illuminating the subtle ways in which our physical and emotional states are intertwined. By exploring Donna Farhi's principles, like the seven moving principles, we gain insights into how our movement patterns reflect our emotional landscape.

Central to our exploration is the understanding of the nervous system, polyvagal theory, and the concept of windows of tolerance. For example, when we learn about polyvagal theory, we understand how certain yoga practices, such as grounding postures like Tadasana (Mountain Pose) or Balasana (Child's Pose), can help to regulate the nervous system, promoting feelings of safety and calmness. By recognizing our own windows of tolerance, we learn to navigate challenging situations with greater ease and resilience.

## Integration of Yogic and Psychological Realms

Yoga offers us a profound language to explore the depths of consciousness. Rooted in Sanskrit, this language speaks to the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit. For instance, when we delve into yogic philosophy, we encounter concepts like Prana (life force energy) and Chakras (energy centers), which provide a framework for understanding the subtle dynamics of our inner world. By integrating these teachings into our practice, we deepen our understanding of ourselves and our place in the universe.

In our journey, we witness the convergence of ancient wisdom and modern science. Psychosomatic medicine and psycho-neuroimmunology corroborate the teachings of yoga, offering insights into regulating and restoring balance within the system. Mindfulness, combined with Dharma teachings, becomes a potent tool for healing psychological wounds and cultivating resilience. For example, when we practice mindfulness meditation, we learn to observe our thoughts and emotions without judgment, thus creating space for healing and transformation.

## Exercise: Somatic Beliefs of Self

We have different “bodies.” This includes our skeletal, muscular, and fascia body, as well as our emotional, thinking and spiritual body. The way we move, hold our postures, use our muscles and faces can reflect our emotional and thinking life. There is a connection between how we feel and think and how we are; this presents in our bodies.

This chart helps you to identify these beliefs and how they show up in the body.

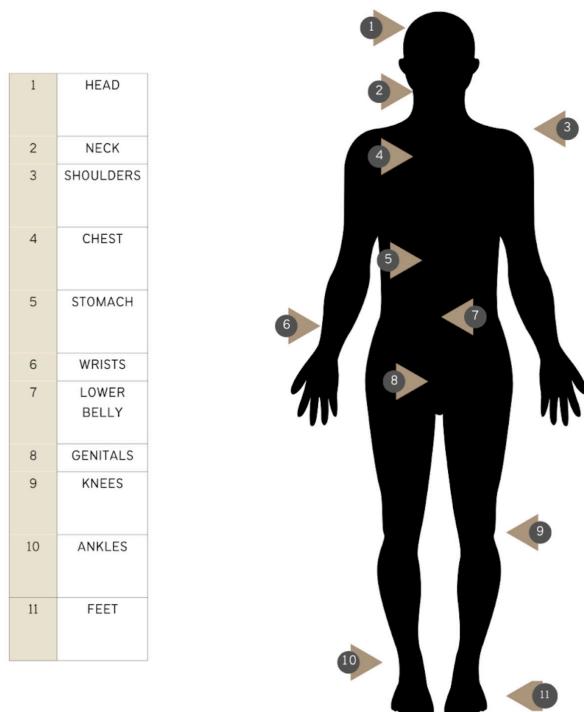
### Instructions

Use the body graph to chart the body areas and the beliefs.

- ~ Start with the physical body and note what you are sensing in the body. You can write on the body graph or circle the areas you feel and sense.
- ~ Now focus on the emotional beliefs that stem from the physical experience of the body, such as: “My tense shoulders feel like I am carrying rocks and burdens for my family.”
- ~ Move to the thinking body. This is what you believe about the physical and emotional experience. For example, “I carry these rocks because I feel responsible for what happened to my family. It’s my fault.”
- ~ Pick two to three core beliefs that are most familiar and govern your daily experience. Reflect on these beliefs and look for how your body and your mind are interconnected.

### Questions

- ~ Thinking body - What do you believe?
- ~ Emotional body - What do you feel?
- ~ Physical body - What do you sense and function?

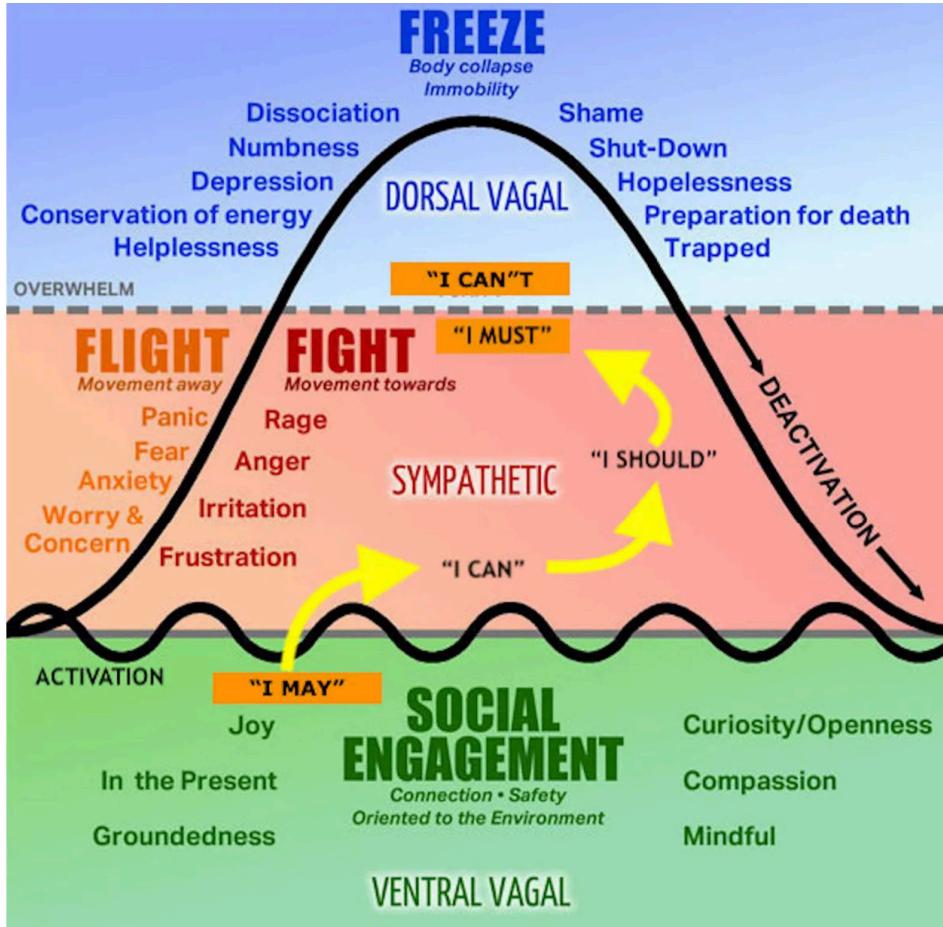


**My Core Beliefs are:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

# Window of Tolerance

*“How you react to someone is your karma, how they react to you is their karma.” - Eckhart Tolle*



As you might have gathered right now, the times where we experience negative karma are in stressful situations - these situations trigger the samskaras within us and often lead us to repeat our habitual responses.

What we have been learning to do is create a space where we can remain in a zone of connection and curiosity with our experience. In psychological terms, what we are doing is learning how to expand our window of tolerance.

The window of tolerance is a way of indicating our response to stressful situations.

The theory of the window of tolerance, developed by Dan Siegel and Pat Ogden, is a framework that describes the range of arousal states that a person can tolerate without becoming overwhelmed or dysregulated.

When we are within our window of tolerance, we are able to think clearly, make decisions, and respond effectively to stressors. However, when we become overwhelmed or dysregulated, we may experience symptoms such as anxiety, panic, or dissociation.

When we experience adversity through trauma and unmet attachment needs this can drastically disrupt our nervous system. Our senses are heightened and our experiences

and reactions are typically intensified and strategies are less readily accessible to us (see blog post on flipping your lid).

Adverse experiences also shrink our window of tolerance meaning we have less capacity to ebb and flow and a greater tendency to become overwhelmed more quickly. Learning how to track and shift can be a powerful tool for promoting regulation and integration throughout the brains, body, and mind.

To widen our window of tolerance, we can engage in practices that help us regulate our nervous system and build resilience. These practices may include:

**Mindfulness:** Mindfulness practices, such as meditation or mindful breathing, can help us develop awareness of our internal experience and increase our ability to tolerate discomfort.

**Self-care:** Taking care of our physical and emotional needs, such as getting enough sleep, eating nourishing foods, and engaging in activities that bring us joy and relaxation, can help us feel more grounded and resilient.

**Movement:** Physical activity, such as yoga or walking, can help release pent-up energy and promote relaxation.

**Connection:** Social support and healthy relationships can help us feel more grounded and supported.

**Therapy:** Therapy can provide a safe and supportive space to process past trauma and learn techniques for dealing with stressors.

## The Witness Consciousness

If you think about it, a trigger is actually a very small part of a gun. What actually gives off the power and sound is the gunpowder loaded inside - our unconscious patterns. When you're triggered by an external event, what's happening is that a negative *samskara* within *you* has been activated, flooding you with emotion that causes an unconscious reaction. This perpetuates the cycle of unhelpful karma as you temporarily lose connection to your conscious self.

Because these *samskaras* live in our subconscious mind, all the way down to our cellular memory, we rarely perceive life situations with conscious awareness of our projections. When we are suffering, we are usually experiencing a negative *samskara*.

If you repeatedly pick at a scab it will not heal; healing negative *samskaras* takes time, attention, patience and awareness, but this is the human journey. Once you start becoming aware of your negative *samskaras*, you'll begin to realize how these familiar patterns repeat as they show up in similar situations throughout life.

Sustained mindfulness reveals when you're triggered and helps you respond from a place of presence vs. patterns. We must maintain an alertness about us, knowing that these patterns can arise at any time. In becoming self-aware and responding instead of reacting, you will experience the openness, flexibility, and wisdom that is the hallmark of true freedom... ultimately, it is a place beyond fear.

By recognizing and dissolving karmic viewpoints, held in place by our *samskaras*, you can move towards a more liberated, authentic version of yourself. Witness consciousness offers a transformative journey that leads to a deeper understanding of who you are beyond conditioning. As you navigate the realms of thought, emotion, and consciousness, you pave the way for personal growth, self-realization, and the pursuit of dharma.

### Steps to Aid Understanding: From Karma to Dharma - Witness Consciousness

**Identify Conditioned Perspectives:** Begin by recognizing the attitudes, opinions, and beliefs that shape your self-perception. Acknowledge how these viewpoints impact your emotions and responses.

**Explore Emotional Triggers:** Reflect on situations that trigger strong emotional reactions. Uncover the connections between these triggers and the underlying conditioned perspectives that fuel them.

**Engage with Witness Consciousness:** Understand that beneath these conditioned perspectives, there exists a witness consciousness—an observer separate from thoughts and emotions. Practice meditation or mindfulness to tap into this state.

**Dissolve Emotional Bonds:** Work on liberating suppressed emotions connected to conditioned beliefs. Embrace your emotional experiences while maintaining the awareness that these emotions do not define you.

**Develop Skillful Emotional Awareness:** Cultivate the ability to skillfully manage emotions as they arise. Connect with bodily sensations, as emotions and sensations are closely intertwined.

**Choose Empowering Perspectives:** Deliberately choose attitudes and beliefs that empower and support your growth. Discard viewpoints that hold you back and choose those that align with your higher potential.

**Couple Witness Consciousness with Meditation:** During meditation, practice observing your thoughts and emotions from the vantage point of witness consciousness. This aids in dissolving karmic patterns during meditative states.

**Accelerate Dissolution of Karma:** As you become adept at maintaining witness consciousness, you will experience an acceleration in dissolving karmic patterns. Witness consciousness, coupled with meditation, allows the source of pure consciousness to support your transformation.

## Practice: The RAIN

*This practice was created by the Insight Meditation Society.*

The next time you feel strong emotions arise that cloud your mind, bringing up a well-spring of complaints, anxieties, doubts and compulsive thoughts of how to escape or control - take a deep breath, stop right where you are, and follow these steps:

**Recognize** your thoughts patterns and let them be just as they are, become the neutral observer.

**Allow** the emotions that arise to manifest. Make room for them, feel them and experience them in their raw state untainted by judgement. Be pure open awareness that witnesses the ebb and flow of the emotional tide.

**Investigate** by noticing how your body is feeling. Where do you sense these thoughts and emotions materialize? Come to the here and now through embodied presence.

**Nurture** what has come forth through self-compassion. In order to transform the parts of us that are suffering, we must first give them the attention and presence they truly need. The unseen parts of ourselves are only craving to be loved and acknowledged.

Chapter III

# Pranayama

# Pranayama - Fourth Limb of Ashtanga Yoga

## Objectives:

- Understand the anatomy and physiology of the breath.
- Describe and understand prana, pranayama and breath patterns
- Apply pranayama practices to asana and meditation.
- Identify individual and student challenges to practicing pranayama.
- Understand the relationship between the scriptures and pranayama.

## The Bandhas:

- Mula Bandha (Root Lock)
- Jalandhara Bandha (Throat Lock)
- Uddiyana Bandha (Navel Lock)
- Tri-Bandha (Three Locks)

## Pranayama Techniques to Practice and Teach:

- Natural Breath
- Abdominal/Chest Breath
- Full Yogic Breath
- Bhastrika (Bellows Breath)
- Ujjayi (Victorious Breath)
- Dirgha Rechak/ Dirgha Purak
- Tri-Bandha Pranayama (Three Locks)

## The Power of the Breath

Prana = life force; yama = restraint or control; and ayama = expansion.

Prana is the vital life force that underlies and pervades all of creation.

Everything we see and feel is manifested due to prana. In the Universe, it keeps the planets circling the sun, supports the birth of stars and galaxies. In the body, it is responsible for all activity and movement, physical and mental.

Microcosm/Macrocosm – as within (the body), so without (the Universe).

Since life consists of rhythm and vibration, dis-ease arises when the natural flow of life energies is suppressed or overworked. Conscious breathing helps to remove blockages of energy and restore balanced rhythm. The word prana in Sanskrit means breath or life. It shares a meaning with the Latin word for breath: “*spiritus*”, which also means spirit. To breathe, or *respirare*, is to be infused with the life-giving spirit/soul through the prana that animates all of life.

**By controlling the breath, we can control our thoughts.**

Stabilizing and refining prana is absolutely essential to all practices of yoga. Conscious breathing practices help you to explore the subtle realms, and refine your energy by serving

as a bridge between body and mind. They are a link between your voluntary and involuntary systems, the conscious and unconscious mind. In a mystical sense, breath is the bridge that connects “heaven and earth”.

Pranayama also tones your nervous system, improves circulation, detoxifies the blood and oxygenates your brain - simultaneously affecting your mental and physical state. This state of balance and ease supports the more inward and subtle practices of Raja yoga.

If you wish to deepen your yoga practice beyond a simple stretching routine and maximize its healing benefits, you may be ripe to incorporate pranayama into your daily practice. How conscious are you of your breath patterns? Do you give attention each day to the regulation of your breathing? Are you aware of the connection between your breath and your emotional state?

Yogis throughout the ages have extolled the virtues of breath practices as a most valuable aid in the pursuit of physical health, mental purification, and higher consciousness. When combined with yoga asana and meditation, you have the foundation of a strong personal practice that will anchor your inner journey. Incorporate conscious breathing into your practice and reap the benefits on all levels of your life.

## The Practice and Guidelines

Pranayama is a very powerful practice, and must progress in a systematic way to ensure the body is prepared for the increased flow of prana, and the stages that leads to. Regular practice supports access to deeper levels of consciousness.

Practice on an empty stomach, with bladder and bowels also empty. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Create a comfortable seat that supports an alignment for head, neck and spine, to allow prana to move smoothly. It is important to create a stable seat that supports stillness of body and less distraction of discomfort.

Main postures (see seated Asana section) used are:

- Siddhasana -Adept's Pose
- Padmasana - Lotus Pose
- Sukhasana - Easy Pose
- Vajrasana -Thunderbolt or Hero Pose.

If these are too difficult to maintain then sit on a bench or a chair keeping the body aligned.

During illness or emotional stress do not follow the regular practice, only use the specific practices for this. If one has ulcers, lung or heart disease, eye (glaucoma) or ear problems, depression or other illnesses be sure to know what practices can be done safely.

There should be no strain in the practice. Increase the repetitions gradually, keeping the practice regular. If any discomfort arises, stop the practice and do Vaparita Karani Mudra (reverse posture), or put legs up the wall. Check with your teacher before continuing.

If practice must be stopped due to travel or illness, re-start at the beginning.

Slow, steady, regular practice will bring results that are deep and lasting. Respect the practices and also your own limits. It is best to learn the practices from a teacher rather than a book.

When practiced properly, they are a great benefit to our overall physical and mental health. Feelings of harmony and peace become more the ‘norm’ with our environment and ourselves, cultivating connection and compassion.

Chapter IV

## **Mantra and Mudra**

*Creation begins with the activity of consciousness, which may be called vibration. Every vibration, starting from its original sources, is the same, differing only in the tone and rhythm caused by a greater or lesser degree of force behind it. On the plane of sound, vibration causes diversity of tone, and the world of atoms, diversity of color. It is by masking together that the vibrations become audible, but at each step towards the surface they multiply, and as they advance they materialize. Sound gives to the consciousness and evidence of its existence, although it is, in fact, the active part of consciousness itself, which turns into sound. The knower so to speak, becomes known to himself; in other words, the consciousness bears witness to its own voice. It is thus that sound appeals to man. All things being derived from, and formed by, vibrations have sound hidden within them, as fire is hidden in Flint, and each atom of the universe, confesses by its tone, "my soul origin is sound". If any solid, or hollow sonorous body is struck it will answer back "I am sound."*

*Hazrat Inayat Khan*

## Mantra & Japa

A mantra is a mystical energy encased in sound. We know that the universe is energy, and that energy is vibration. The vibration of the sound carries the imprint of the energy that is latent within the expression.

When a child says the word “mama”, it is also a mantra. When we hear and think of this word it contains an energy of nurturing, closeness and affection that accompanies the thought of the mother. A mother who hears this sound immediately responds to it on a somatic, emotional and psychological level. If this child called the mother by her first name, it would not have the same impact that if they used the word for mother in their native tongue.

When it comes to the chanting of mantras, particularly devotional ones, we are invoking archetypal energies within the sounds. They are employed differently in shabda yoga, shakti yoga, bhava yoga and naad yoga. However, the essence of employing sound vibration creates a sympathetic resonance within and evokes a response from without.

In this sense, everything in the universe is listening. We are part of a massive echo chamber, like a great dome where our thoughts and speech reverberate through the mind-field and come back to us. For this reason, we must use our words mindfully and respect them as powerful tools for manifestation.

Mantra aids us in using the power of our voice to bring about causes and conditions that are favourable for our spiritual growth. Uttering words and sounds that arise from the awakened consciousness, from the devotional heart, help us to align with the virtues of truth, goodness and beauty.

Through the chanting of divine names and sounds, the heart is opened and intellect softened to be receptive to both higher knowledge and also to grace.

Mantra can be practiced in a very soft, continuous and private way. It can also be used in a group setting like kirtans to create a more enlivening energy of communion. We must

use the mantras in a way that suits our disposition and intent. While pronunciation is important, rely more deeply on the feeling and the sense of concentrated attention when practicing them.

In yoga, japa is a sonic meditation that brings us into the resonance of unity, or Oneness. This rhythmic style of chanting leads you beyond the discursive mind and into a state of absorption with a desired thought-form or energy. Constant repetition of a mystic syllable, sound, prayer, spiritual saying, or divine name helps one attain union with a spiritual reality. It can be chanted aloud, whispered, hummed, or internalized mentally.

There is a beautiful punjabi word, simran, or smarana in sanskrit, which means 'remembrance'. The whole work of yoga, of spirituality, is to help you remember what has been forgotten through uniting with the Divine. Japa, as an approach to this remembrance, is perhaps the simplest and most direct passport to God and a universal practice in all religious traditions of the world.

In the science of sound, entrainment is the gravitational pull towards synchronicity that is created through resonance. Just how when you sing with a piano your voice is more in tune, or when you're in the presence of a truly spiritual person you feel calm or uplifted, your vibration harmonizes with your external influence. As the breath entrains your heartbeat, you too can intentionally influence the vibration of your body and mind. The ancient yogis, knowing this, made the conscious repetition of mantras and divine names an integral part of accessing higher frequencies, meditative states and opening the heart to God.

## Benefits of Mantra Chanting

There is great research in our modern day on the many benefits of all forms of sacred singing, vowel toning, harmonic overtones chanting as well as mantra chanting. Each of these disciplines has a positive effect upon the physical, emotional and spiritual body - the body, mind & spirit! The cells, organs, muscles, bones and the entire physical body responds well to the healing vibration of sound and mantra.

Mantra repetition begins a vibration that permeates the entire body. Sustained repetition of a mantra will eventually vibrate every cell, every atom and every molecule of one's being.

### Physical benefits of mantra chanting are as follows:

- ~ oxygenates the cells while decreasing the consumption of oxygen in the body
- ~ calms respiration rate, heart rate and slows the rate of metabolism
- ~ relaxes the muscles, distresses the body while calming the mind
- ~ lowers blood pressure
- ~ improves blood and lymph circulation
- ~ deepens breathing
- ~ helps to relieve chronic pain
- ~ stimulates the auto-immune system
- ~ stimulates energy flow through the meridian pathways in the body
- ~ charges the entire brain while increasing brain activity and memory
- ~ equalizes brain waves while inducing the alpha brain wave activity for relaxation & visualization
- ~ energizes prana in the body for rejuvenation of the cells, glands and organs
- ~ increases levels of melatonin in the brain and massages the entire inner body

**Psychological benefits of mantra chanting are as follows:**

- ~ repetitive chanting frees the busy mind bringing one to a place of calmness,
- ~ one-pointedness and concentration
- ~ sharpens clarity and alertness of the mind
- ~ calms the emotions, impedes anxiety and helps to decrease insomnia
- ~ silences the subconscious chatter and begins to delete negative thought patterns
- ~ enhances creativity and opens the door to inspirations as well as problem solving
- ~ heart-opening thereby increasing one's patience, trust and inner peace
- ~ improves self-confidence
- ~ weakens or burns one's negative karmic patterns
- ~ helps to lift depression especially when chanting with large groups of people
- ~ balances the solar and lunar energy currents in the body (pingala & ida)
- ~ helps one along their dharmic path; guides one's purpose in life

**Spiritual benefits of mantra chanting are as follows:**

- ~ Activating the pranic life force at the base of the spine and in the chakra centers mantra
- ~ chanting is awakening on many levels; kundalini awakening
- ~ cleanses & purifies the energy body while raising the consciousness of the reciter
- ~ helps to remove the veils of illusion and ignorance which in turn helps one along their dharmic path and life's purpose
- ~ releases one from the bondage of predetermined karmic circumstances
- ~ balances the pingala (positive, solar) and ida (negative, lunar) energy channels in the body
- ~ thus once again activating kundalini energy at the base of the spine
- ~ creates a magnetic, positive current of energy around the chanter which enables one to
- ~ attract more positive and synchronistic energies or experiences
- ~ enhances the spiritual charge of energy in each of the chakra centers as well as helps open
- ~ the chakras
- ~ invokes divine energy
- ~ eases the suffering of the dying and prepares one for death / liberation
- ~ creates more desire and awareness of being in service for the good of humanity
- ~ creates more peace, love and joy in one's life

*Source of Benefits: Chakra Yoga TTC Manual*

## Key Mantras For Reference

*Mantra is dynamic, powerful; it will sink deeper into your consciousness.... because mantra is the living symbol of the Divine. As it penetrates the deeper levels of consciousness it comes to stand for the highest we can conceive of, the highest we can aspire to, the highest we can love*

-Eknath Easwaran

### Om Asato Maa Mantra

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

#### Mantra:

Om Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya  
 Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya  
 Mrtyor-Maa Amrtam Gamaya  
 Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih

#### Translation:

Lead us from the unreal to the real  
 Lead us from darkness to light  
 Lead us from death to immortality  
 Aum peace, peace, peace!

The individual words have the following meaning:

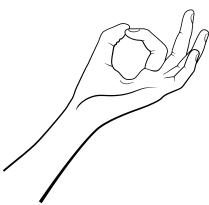
- ~ **Asat**ao: from falsehood
- ~ **Mā**: me
- ~ **Sat**: to truth
- ~ **Gamaya**: lead
- ~ **Tamasao**: from darkness
- ~ **Jyotir**: to light
- ~ **Mrtyor**: from death
- ~ **Amrtam**: to immortality

#### More information:

The Asatoma Sadgamaya Mantra is a universal prayer for enlightenment and freedom from fear. This chant is a set of four powerful affirmations of well-being that we put out within the Universe. Through this mantra, the chanter and the listener seek to dispel negativity in its various forms and stay aligned on their path of a purposeful life.

- ~ Chant before embarking on a journey.
- ~ Chant at the beginning of the year, change of the season, or birthday.

## Mudras



Many spiritual traditions around the world claim that there is a tremendous flow of energy in our hands. In yoga, each finger represents one of the five elements and is also associated with a planet.

### Elements associated with the fingers

Thumb	Agni (fire)
Forefinger	vaayu (wind)
Middle finger	akasha (ether)
Ring finger	prithvi (earth)
Little finger	jala (water)

### Planets Associated with the Fingers

Index finger	Jupiter
Middle finger	Saturn
Ring Finger	Uranus and the sun
Little finger	Mercury
Thumb	your personal energy field that makes contact with the energy of the planets through

### The mudra configurations

The fingers are also associated with the gunas, or modes of nature:

### Gunas associated with the Fingers

Thumb	Paraamatma, The Divine or Cosmic Coul
Forefinger	jiva, the individual
Middle finger	akasha (ether)
Ring finger	rajas (activity)
Little finger	tamas (inertia)

Yoga mudras make use of special gestures involving the fingers to create specific circuits of energy in our spiritual and physical bodies, connecting us with the energy of the universe.

### Four Mudras of the Hands

The following four mudras are powerful gestures that can accompany your mantra recitations:

**Gnana Mudra:** Gnana means “wisdom”. For this mudra, touch the tip of the index finger to the tip (or middle) of the thumb to stimulate sacred knowledge and spiritual understanding.

**Shani Mudra:** Shani is the name for the planet Saturn. In this mudra, connect the tip of the middle finger to the tip of the thumb to confer patience and facilitate purity of intention.

**Soorya Mudra:** Soorya is the sun. For this mudra, connect the tip of the ring finger with tip of the thumb to increase health and vitality.

**Buddhi Mudra:** Buddhi is the intellect. For this mudra, connect the tip of the little finger to the tip of the thumb to enhance clarity. This is a great gesture for improving communication.

\*Section on Mudras taken from “Yoga of Sound” by Russil Paul

Chapter IV

# **Yoga Asana, Alignment and Awareness**

# Foundations in Asana Training

## Objectives

- Discover Sthira - steadiness, alertness and Sukha - comfort and ease in asana practice
- Apply Donna Farhi's seven moving principles of practice.
- Learn principles of alignment, observation and demonstration.
- Learn benefits, contraindications and modifications of Yoga asanas.
- Develop the use of language, and verbal cues for postures so that students can self-correct and experience the adjustment in their own body without constant external adjustment.
- Understand Western and Eastern functional anatomy and physiology.
- Discuss the role of counter and transition poses.
- Understand the importance of breath in practice.
- Create balanced and holistic class sequences.
- Discover Triputi - Union of Body, Breath, Mind
- Understand the sacred and subtle space of a yoga teacher.
- Learn to say and understand the names of the postures in Sanskrit and English.
- Learn how to find your voice and creativity as a Yoga teacher.
- Demonstrate the ability to teach postures with a partner and in a group.
- Learn how to practice the postures correctly in your own body.

*Find time every day to do something to maintain the asana practice. Sometimes both body and mind yield to willpower, and at other times they rebel. Do you have a problem part that makes the practice difficult for you? An injured knee? A stiff back? That is your problem child. Learn how to deal with it and how to nurture it, as you would a child who needs extra love and attention... Do not be afraid. Do not be attached to your body. Even if fear comes, accept it, and find the courage to come through it."*

~BKS Iyengar

## Guidelines for Teaching Yoga

Foster an atmosphere conducive to learning, one that feels “sacred” or special. Feeling comfortable with eye contact and demonstrating the practice helps establish a connection and fosters trust within the class. It also aids in “reading” the class, discerning if further instruction is necessary or if it is time to allow for silent introspection. When the class is seated with eyes closed, you may feel hesitant to speak clearly for fear of “disturbing” them. However, it is more disruptive for students to strain to hear instructions..

# Key Elements for Designing a Holistic Yoga Class

Designing a yoga class is an art and science. Like any art form, it is subjective; however there are underlying principles that ensure that the majority of students have a rewarding experience. Like a science, each class must have a logical formula, sequence, structure and form to support energy flow, and homeostasis. The goal of the teacher is to cultivate and master this art and science and to see that every student has a balanced, harmonious and safe class.

## Aim of the Class

- Stress release, rejuvenation and relaxation
- Improve flexibility, balance and strength
- Improve health and wellness
- Improve focus and concentration
- Reduce tension, aches and pain
- To ground, center and stabilize
- Self-care, physical and emotional healing
- Spiritual awakening and connection to higher Self
- Build community (satsang)

## Teaching Beginner Yoga Class Levels

This is perhaps one of the most challenging and rewarding groups of students to teach, since they are learning how to practice yoga correctly and safely in their bodies for the first time. Everybody is unique and different, so the posture may look different in each student. The job of the teacher is to set the pose up correctly, in alignment, so that injury does not take place.

For optimal teaching and learning, it is best to **teach asana in 3 stages:**

1. How to get into the pose
2. How to hold the pose
3. How and when to come out of the pose

### **Beginner Classes:**

- Postures can be held for shorter length of time
- Repetition of a pose to reinforce learning and give students confidence.
- Offer modifications: learn how to modify the pose according to the individual's needs.
- Offer props: know what props to use in each pose and how to use them
- Simple instructions
- Encouragement

### **Mixed Level Classes:**

- Offer simple and more challenging options

- Asanas are held for longer periods of time to refine alignment and subtleties of pose.
- Grouping challenging postures together.
- Focus on flow and transitions between the postures. Flow includes continuous movement from one posture to the next i.e surya namaskar.

## Class Style Examples

### Hatha Yoga

This traditional practice refers to the physical and spiritual practice of Yoga. Discover strength, flexibility, and alignment through postures, as well as concentration and awareness of breath and mind.

### Holistic Yoga

Each holistic yoga class combines warm-ups, pranayama, asana, savasana and meditation to create a balanced and well-rounded class. The breath is emphasized in both movement and stillness of practice.

### Gentle Yoga

Students embrace a calm, holistic, therapeutic and simple practice to support body, mind and breath. Props can be used to restore and rejuvenate the body and mind.

### Vinyasa

This style synchronizes breath with movement and flow to create an invigorating, energizing & revitalizing class. It is the transition and flow between the postures.

## Theming

In our yoga classes, we craft themes to guide our practice with purpose. These themes range from purely physical to delving into energy centers or introducing philosophical concepts, aiming to center our students and aid their growth both on and off the mat.

When selecting a theme, we integrate it seamlessly into every aspect of the class – from the music to the ambiance, the language used, and the poses taught. Over time, these themes can intertwine across classes, fostering profound experiences rooted in a shared intention.

Developing a theme sets the tone for the entire session, providing a focal point for both instructors and students alike. It's essential that these themes are authentic, relevant, and respectful of the teachings, ensuring that everyone can benefit from them. Whether overtly stated or subtly implied, themes serve as a guiding force throughout our yoga journey.

## Theme types

**Physical:** Focusing on a specific area of the body, shoulders, hips, heart openers, etc.

**Feeling or Emotional:** Humbleness, will, commitment, integrity, frequency etc.

**Yoga Philosophy:** Yamas, niyamas, particular text or book

**Energetic:** Nadis, chakras, vayus, etc.

**Yogic History:** Focus on a hindu deity or goddess

**Devotional:** Dedicating the practice to a loved one, victims of a tragic event, God, etc. (this type of theme is more personal for each individual student)

*“The study of asana is not about mastering the posture. It is about using the posture to understand and transform yourself.” ~BKS Iyengar*

# Holistic Yoga Model

Introduce yourself: Namaste, my name is.....

Important: Ask if there are any injuries or health concerns via waivers and questions.

## Tune-In:

AUM 3x (define briefly what this means)

Timing: 60 min class: 5 min; 90 min class: 5 min.

## Pranayama:

Describe and teach 1-2 pranayama practices.

Timing: 60 min class: 7-10 min; 90 min class: 10-15 min.

## Warms-ups:

An important part of the class to avoid injury and strain, to lubricate the joints and release tension from the major parts of the body: head, neck, shoulders, wrists, navel, spine, hips, legs, feet. Timing: 60 min class: 7-10 min; 90 min class: 10-15 min.

## Asana:

Prepare the yoga class sequence using sequencing guideline and arch progression model. Start to introduce some of the moving principles of practice. Important: Always teach benefits, contraindications, and modifications of postures. Cue with breath- Inhale/Exhale. Timing: 60 min class: 20-30 min; 90 min class: 40- 45 min.

## Shavasana:

During savasana the breath returns to natural breathing.

Guide students to relax every part of their body.

Timing: 60 min class: 5-7 min; 90 min class: 10 min.

## Meditation:

For concentration, focus, opening the heart, mantra/chanting

Timing: 60 min class: 5 min; 90 min class: 10-12 min.

## Close:

Chanting mantra Om Shantih Shantih Shantih, a prayer and/or sacred reading. This brings the circle of teaching to completion.

Timing: 60 min class: 2-3 min; 90 min class: 2-3 min

“Yoga is not a practice of attaining idealized physical postures, but a process of self-exploration, self-acceptance, and self-transformation. Reinforce”

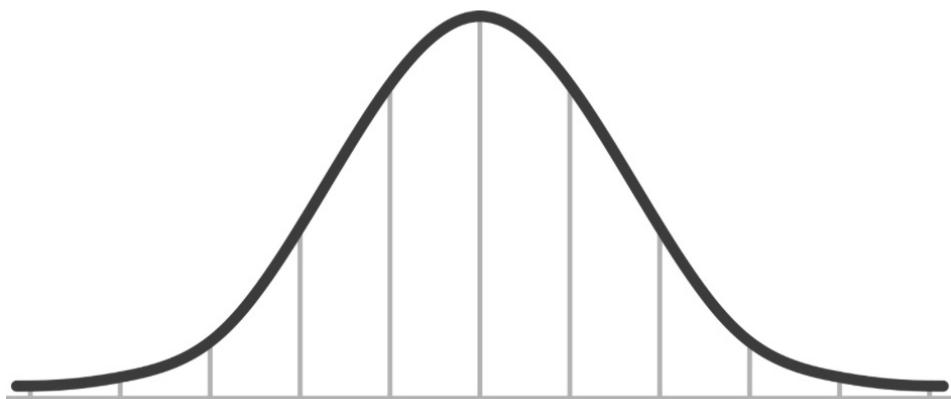
Mark Stephens, *Yoga Sequencing: Designing Transformative Yoga Classes*

### Arch-Progression Model for Asanas

The Arch Progression Model is a formula to ensure logical sequencing of yoga asanas.

Each class has a beginning, middle and end. The goal is to connect the postures to the breath. Primarily, postures are chosen to warm-up the body. This increases circulation and helps to prepare for more challenging or apex postures.

The apex postures are used to produce and sustain warmth and heat, increase endurance and mobility. They are considered the challengers of the class, i.e. asanas that are energizing, or strenuous. Finally, the goal is to gradually bring the energy down, eventually taking the class to the floor for corpse pose. It is good to group postures together from the same category in a class for balanced structure and flow.



### Holistic Yoga Class Sample Sequences (60 minutes class)

#### Example 1: Theme: Moving Principles of Practice: Breathe and Align

Intro and Tune-in: 3-5 minutes

~ Introduce self; ask for any healthy concerns

~ Om 3x

**Pranayama:** 8-10 minutes

~ Full Yogic Breath 5x Ujjayi 5x

**Warm-ups:** 8 minutes

~ Neck Rolls Shoulder Shrugs Wrist Circles Spinal Circles Ankle Rotation

**Asana:** 30 minutes

# The Moving Principles of Practice

*We join spokes together in a wheel, but it is the center hole that makes the wagon move.*

*We shape clay into a pot, but it is the emptiness inside that holds whatever we want.*

*We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it livable.*

*Being is what we work with, non-being is what we use.*

*~ Tao Te Ching, translated by Stephen Mitchell*

I once had a Tai Chi teacher, Master Chu, who said something to me that I never forgot: “we perform the form to practice the principles”.

Any artist who has been working on their craft for a number of years can attest to the limitation of form. In the beginning of a practice the form is alluring because it gives us a clear structure and goals that we can obtain. It provides something tangible that we can latch onto as what it should \_\_\_\_\_ like (fill in the blank i.e. look, sound, taste).

Of course this is essential in the learning process, but if we forget that the form is like the finger pointing to the moon, we will miss all the heavenly glory by focusing on the finger alone. What we really want is to “catch the feeling”. Once we catch the feeling, we are able to translate this feeling into many variations of a form, and actually use it as a way of exploring how the outer forms are manifestations of underlying inner principles.

In a culture where our body is just a vehicle to transport our head from place to place, it is very common to feel disconnected from our body. As a yoga teacher, it can be very deceptive to think that we are connecting students to their bodies when we are really just leading them through a surface level exercise practice that has them mostly in their heads trying to manipulate their bodies to conform to a certain idea of what the teacher wants, or the instagram yogi they have been following.

When it comes to our yoga asana practice, our goal is to learn how to move from the inside-out. To do this we need to develop our interoception, or the sense that allows us to feel our body from within. When we can feel the body from the inside the experience of the poses changes tremendously. We become less concerned with obtaining an outer label, but fulfilling an inner impulse. Less focused on how it looks, and more focused on how it's embodied.

This is somatic work in practice, this is how our physical asana practice can have ripple effects on our psyches and our lives. The more we use our practice on the mat to really connect with how we feel, how we breathe, and how we move from the inside out, the more authenticity that radiates in our life.

When you do this, you get more than just an asana practice. You get a life practice. Learning from our bodies is a gift that keeps on giving, and since the body is always changing, our practice and the knowledge we get changes as well. As a teacher it is a tremendous gift to be able to share this with our students and makes teaching yoga deeply fulfilling.

## The Seven Moving Principles

These seven moving principles were developed by Donna Farhi, a master teacher of Hatha Yoga and Somatics. They can be found in her classic book “Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit”.

These are intended to be somatic sutras, woven threads that continue to unfold meaning as we contemplate them in practice; dynamic principles that are held in mind as we engage in our asana practice. It’s not something that we can do all at once, the best way is to take one or two principles and explore them in any given pose or let them weave through an entire session.

The exercises that are shared in connection to these moving principles are intended to create mini-awakenings of how they feel in the body. Once you catch the feeling, you will be able to explore and apply them within your asana practice.

Take it slow...which is actually more advanced. Remember the words of Rumi : “the way you make love is the way God will make love to you”. Romance the practice through the principles in both their active and yielding manifestations, and enjoy the way the intelligence, vital force and the soft animal of your body opens up to you.

### Breathe

#### Let the Breath Move You

The breath arises out of stillness, expands, condenses, and returns to this ground of stillness. Oscillation is an intrinsic part of life and all movements.

#### The Principle in Practice:

Take time to connect with your breath before you begin a movement and then as you practice the asana go slowly enough so that you don’t lose the connection

Whenever you notice yourself holding your breath, exhale completely, blowing the air out through your mouth until the last whisper of air leaves your lungs. Wait for the inhalation to begin spontaneously, and then begin the yoga asana again with the support of your breath

Slow down! Roughness, unevenness, or shortness of breath are signs that you are forcing the body to open too quickly or are moving in a way that is creating disharmony.

### Yield

#### Yield to the Earth: Weight and Levity

Any surface of the body that makes contact with the ground must yield to the Earth. Actively yielding to the earth creates a rebounding force away from the earth, elongating the body upward into space. Whenever the relationship of yelling to earth is lost, breathing is restricted.

#### The Principle in Practice

- Bending your knees when standing makes it easier to feel the action of yielding to the earth. You can fold and unfold any joint as a way to stimulate yielding. As you gradually straighten the limb, maintain the connection to the ground.
- Yield on your exhalation, feel the levity of the rebounding action on the
- Inhalation.
- Tension in the toes, feet, ankles, knees, hips, and buttock area prevent yielding. Check these areas often.

## Radiate

### Move from the Inside Out: The Human Starfish

The six limbs of the body, (head, tail, arms and legs) connect to one another through the core of the body. The initiation of movement from the core to the limbs, and from the limbs back to the core is called Naval radiation.

### The Principle in Practice

- Always begin by checking that your core is mobile and free.
- Initiate your movements from the center, like a flower blossoming. First find the connection between the navel and the head, and then work on the connection of the arms and legs to the core.
- Practice without arms. One of the most common errors in asana practice is to extend the limbs around a tight, unmoving core. If you tend to hold your belly in, try practicing without the use of your arms. Relax your arms by your sides and then place one hand firmly on your abdomen to help encourage more openness through your center. Use your hand to encourage the belly to open, then try extending your arms once again from this now mobile center.

## Center

### Maintain the Integrity of the Spine: The Central Axis

The integrity of the spinal column must be maintained in all movements. The spine elongates, through the combined forces of gravity, the breath, and our directed intention.

### The Principle in Practice

- When working with any posture, ask, “Where does my spine need to be to catch the wave of the breath?” Experiment with your position until you feel the breath rolling through the spine.
- A tight core prevents spinal elongation. Check that your belly is mobile in every asana.
- Everyone has areas of the spine that become blocked. These blocked areas prevent elongation. Make a note of your tight spots and spend a little time in each practice session working on movements that open these segments.

## Support

### Establish Foundations of Support: Structural Building Blocks

Whatever touches the ground becomes the foundation of support for each asana

### The Principle in Practice

- Whenever you are having difficulty in a posture, check and adjust the base of the pose first.
- The broader the base of support, the more stable you will be.
- Tension in the upper body indicates a lack of support in the lower body.

## Align

### Create Clear Lines of Force: Alignment and Sequential Flow

Alignment is the clear sequential flow of force through the body

#### The Principle in Practice

- ~ Pain is a warning signal that you are poorly aligned. Pain and good alignment are mutually exclusive conditions.
- ~ Modify your alignment in every pose to reflect your present flexibility and skill level rather than forcing your body to conform to an ideal position. Your body is unique and what you need to do to be well aligned will differ from another person.
- ~ Good alignment allows you to do more with less effort. Poor alignment requires more energy to sustain.

## Engage

### Engage the Whole Body: The Democratic Body Community

Every body system has its own unique function, expression, and associated quality of consciousness and is interdependent with every other system in the body. In embodied spiritual practice, we nurture democracy within the body community as a way of creating balance, harmony, and freedom.

#### The Principle in Practice

- Pain is a warning signal that you are poorly aligned. Pain and good alignment are mutually exclusive conditions.
- Modify your alignment in every pose to reflect your present flexibility and skill level rather than forcing your body to conform to an ideal position. Your body is unique and what you need to do to be well aligned will differ from another person.
- Good alignment allows you to do more with less effort. Poor alignment requires more energy to sustain.

## Return

### Return the Mind to Original Silence: Developing Clear Perception

#### The Principle in Practice

- The practice is for you; you are not a sacrificial victim to the practice.
- Therefore, modify the practice to suit your needs and individual constitution.
- If you get confused or are unsure of yourself in an asana, pause, breathe out, relax, and wait for inner guidance.
- You can receive guidance only when you are calm and receptive. Anger and impatience prevent you from understanding both the cause of your difficulties and possible solutions to your problem. Resist the temptation to become ungrounded because of difficulty.

*Source: By; Farhi, Donna. Yoga Mind, Body & Spirit, St. Martin's Griffin, New York (29-80)*

## Tad-asana | Mountain Pose

### Imagery:

Tall, Height, Stillness, Strength, Earth, Rocks, Grounded, Present, Stable



Mountain pose is the foundation for all standing postures. Learning how to teach and practice this posture is essential and sets up proper alignment for the rest of the standing and balancing poses.

### Action cues:

- Stand tall with feet hip-width apart.
- Engage thighs keep a slight bend in knees.
- Lengthen spine, imagine crown of head reaching towards ceiling.
- Relax shoulders, roll them back and down.
- Maintain a soft gaze forward.
- Breathe deeply and evenly.
- Find balance between grounding through feet and lengthening through spine.

### Anatomical Instruction:

- Stand in anatomical position.
- Arms relax down alongside the body and rotate slightly externally while triceps lightly contract to extend the elbows.

### Energetic cues:

- Yield as you soften around the outer edges of the feet, allow the rebounding force to energize the entire body as prana moves upward
- Connect to the center of your being from a place alignment with the spine, shoulders and hips radiating outward through all the limbs and elongating the spine from its base up beyond the crown

### Corrections: What to look for

- ~ Feet – toes pointed out or in
- ~ Knees- locked
- ~ Pelvis – tilted
- ~ Shoulders- tight or hunched
- ~ Chin – lifting or dropping

**Contraindications:**

- ~ None

**Benefits:**

- ~ Improves posture and alignment of the spine
- ~ Reduces fatigue
- ~ Supports health in all the joints
- ~ The muscles of the pelvic floor are active creating Mula Bandha

**Modifications:**

- ~ Use a wall or chair for support.

**Uttan-asana | Standing Forward Fold****Imagery:**

Release, Lengthening, Stretching, New Perspectives, Letting Go

**Action cues:**

- Start standing bringing your hands to your hips and exhale as you fold forward with a flat back from the hips, keeping your knees soft or slightly bent.
- Let your torso hang over your legs with your head relaxed.
- Reach your hands towards the floor or hold onto opposite elbows.
- Exhale to deepen your fold.
- Relax your shoulders away from your ears.
- Feel the stretch along your spine, hamstrings, and calves.
- Option to gently sway side to side or nod your head yes and no to release tension.
- Hold for several breaths before slowly rising back up (flat or curved?)

**Cueing Half-way lift:**

- Engage your thigh muscles and draw your belly button towards your spine as you rise part way up.

**Anatomical Instruction:**

- Fold forward, flexing hips and tilting pelvis anteriorly (sitting bones lift)
- Head and neck remain relaxed, with a slight chin retraction.
- Energetic cues:

- Imagine a line of energy extending from your tailbone to the crown of your head, creating space along your spine even as you fold
- With each inhale, invite energy to rise from the earth through your legs, energizing your entire body
- As you exhale, continue yielding to soften tension and be supported
- Visualize energy flowing freely through your body as you breathe

**Variations:**

- A. Hands to earth or big toes
  - ~ Bicep bends the elbows, adduct toward the midline
  - ~ Hands push the trunk deeper into the pose
- B. Hands interlaced behind back
  - ~ Fingers interlaced, arms extend
- C. Arms relaxed or elbows bound
  - ~ Bicep bends the elbows
  - ~ Hands push the trunk deeper into the pose

**Corrections: What to look for**

- ~ Position of feet as this can affect the ankles
- ~ Knees - locked
- ~ Shoulders tensed
- ~ Chin – sticking too far out or in

**Contraindications:**

- ~ Unregulated high or low blood pressure
- ~ Lower back pain or sciatica
- ~ Dizziness
- ~ Pregnancy

**Benefits:**

- ~ Extension and flexion in the spine and hips
- ~ Increases circulation and massages the digestive organs
- ~ Stretches the calves, hamstrings and torso
- ~ Stretches the sciatic nerve in the back of the legs

**Modifications:**

- ~ Only forward fold halfway if a person has unregulated high or low pressure
- ~ Student can take hold of elbows or rest hands on thighs

## Trikon-asana | Triangle Pose

### Imagery:

Angles, Alignment, Triangle, Connection, Opening the Heart



### Action cues:

- Start in a wide-legged stance, toes pointing forward.
- Engage your right thigh, turning your right toes out and keeping your legs straight but not locked.
- Ground through the outer edges of your feet and lift through your inner arches.
- As you inhale, extend your arms out to the sides at shoulder height, palms facing down.
- Exhale and reach your right hand toward your right foot, keeping your torso long. Avoid collapsing into the pose
- Reach your left arm up toward the ceiling, creating length along your left side body
- On the exhale, rotate from the belly to open the chest
- If comfortable, gaze up at your left hand.
- Hold the pose for several breaths, then inhale to come up slowly, returning to center.
- Repeat on the other side.

### Anatomical Instruction:

- Engage the quadriceps in both legs to extend the knees, as the back hip extends and the front hip flexes.
- Lift the back foot towards the shin in dorsiflexion, while applying pressure to the ball of the front foot.
- Activate the muscles along the spine and the obliques to elongate the trunk and gently rotate it upwards.

### Energetic cues:

- Radiate from the navel center.
- With each inhale, elongate your spine, feeling energy drawing from the base of your pelvis to the crown of your head and beyond it to offer support to the trunk, similarly into the side ribs, out the extended arms, and down into the legs

## Meditation | Seated pose variations:



**Sukh-asana** - Easy Pose or Tailor's Pose



**Siddh-asana** - Sage's Pose



**Padm-asana** - Half or Full Lotus



**Vajr-asana** - Thunderbolt pose

## Chat-ur-anga Dand-asana | Four-limbed Staff Pose

**Imagery:** Balance, Wood Board, Head to Tail Alignment, Release Tension, Alert

This pose is an excellent core and arm strengthener when practiced correctly with awareness of the breath and body. It will take some time to build up strength and stability to hold the posture for several breaths. Take it slowly and be careful not to over-stress your neck, arms and shoulders.



### Action Cues

- Start in Plank Pose, with your hands shoulder-width apart and wrists under your shoulders.
- Spread your fingers wide and press firmly into the mat to engage your arm muscles.
- Shift your weight slightly forward, coming onto the tips of your toes.
- Lower your body down as a single unit, keeping your elbows close to your ribs.
- Lower halfway down until your upper arms are parallel to the floor, forming a 90-degree angle with your elbows.
- Keep your core engaged and your spine long, avoiding any collapsing in your lower back.
- Hug your shoulder blades towards each other and broaden across your collarbones.
- Engage your leg muscles to support the lower half of your body, keeping your knees lifted off the mat.
- Press the tops of your feet into the mat and engage your thigh muscles.
- Keep your neck in line with your spine, gaze forward, and avoid dropping your head.
- To release, exhale and lower all the way down to the mat, or inhale and push back up to Plank or Downward Facing Dog.

### Anatomical Instructions:

- The serratus anterior tether the shoulder blades, preventing them from winging upward
- The rhomboids connect the shoulder blades to the spine and adduct them toward the midline, stabilizing the shoulders
- The biceps and triceps stabilize the elbows, maintaining a right angle to hold the arm bone firmly in the joint
- The erector spinae and quadratus lumborum work together to lift the back, containing the core working with the rectus abdominis
- The psoas contracts the hips slightly forward, while the buttocks stabilize the hip joints
- The quadriceps straightens the knees

- The calf muscles attempt to flex the ankles and push off, counteracting the push back of the arm

### **Energetic cues:**

- Support the structure of the body aligning with the vertical the vertical core
- Feel the rebounding force drawing up from the earth through the hands and up the arms connecting to the center from which we radiate, like a feedback loop.

### **Corrections: What to look for**

- ~ Sagging low back - insufficient core activation
- ~ Chin sticking upwards
- ~ Shoulders dropped down, shoulder blades poking out
- ~ Elbows misaligned with wrists, sticking out
- ~ Sitting bones reaching up, instead of the entire spine being in neutral alignment

### **Contraindications:**

- ~ Shoulder, wrist or hand injuries, carpal tunnel, tendonitis
- ~ Foot or ankle injuries; Back injury
- ~ Pregnancy – 3rd trimester

### **Benefits:**

- ~ Strengthens wrists, shoulders, arms and upper body
- ~ Tones and strengthens abdominal, core muscles, and nervous system
- ~ Builds endurance and stamina

## **Phalakasana | Plank Pose**

**Imagery:** Balance, Wood Board, Head to Tail Alignment, Release Tension, Alert



This pose is an excellent core and arm strengthener when practiced correctly with awareness of the breath and body. It will take some time to build up strength and stability to hold the posture for several breaths. Take it slowly and be careful not to over-stress your neck, arms and shoulders.

### **Action cues:**

- Start in a tabletop position with your wrists under your shoulders and your knees hip-width apart.
- Spread your fingers wide and press firmly into the mat to engage your arms.
- Extend one leg back at a time, coming into a straight line from your head to your heels.

- Engage your core by drawing your navel towards your spine.
- Keep your spine neutral, avoiding any rounding or collapsing in your lower back.
- Press down through your hands and lift through your shoulder blades to avoid collapsing in your chest.
- Engage your legs by lifting your kneecaps and pressing through your heels.
- Lengthen your tailbone towards your heels to maintain a straight line from your head to your heels.
- Keep your gaze slightly forward and your neck in line with your spine.
- To release, gently lower your knees back to the mat or transition into the next pose.

### **Anatomical Instructions:**

- Biceps extend the elbows, fingers and wrists flex. The forearms rotate internally while upper arm bones rotate slightly externally releasing the neck
- The calf muscle attempts to flex the ankles and “push off” or forward opposing the flexed wrists.

### **Energetic cues:**

- Support the structure of the body aligning with the vertical the vertical core
- Draw a line of energy from the tailbone along the front body up to the sternum
- Feel the rebounding force drawing up from the earth through the hands and up the arms connecting to the center from which we radiate, like a feedback loop.

### **Corrections: What to look for**

- ~ Sagging low back - insufficient core activation
- ~ Chin sticking upwards
- ~ Shoulders behind hands
- ~ Shoulder blades poking out
- ~ Sitting bones reaching up, instead of the entire spine being in neutral alignment

### **Contraindications:**

- ~ Shoulder, wrist or hand injuries, carpal tunnel, tendonitis
- ~ Foot or ankle injuries; Back injury
- ~ Pregnancy – 3rd trimester
- ~ Osteoporosis

### **Benefits:**

- ~ Strengthens wrists, shoulders, arms and upper body
- ~ Tones and strengthens abdominal, core muscles, and nervous system
- ~ Builds endurance and stamina

### **Modifications:**

- ~ Bring the knees down to the floor

## Arm Balances and Inversions

**Arm balances** are beneficial for strengthening mental focus, improving core and shoulder strength, and increasing feelings of self-confidence, courage, and empowerment. Many arm balances are also considered inversions—where the body is suspended above the head, and all of the weight is balanced on the arms or hands.

**Inversions** are beneficial for increasing the blood flow to the heart, lungs, and brain. They also stimulate the lymph to move toxins out of the body in the lymphatic system, improving overall immunity.

While balancing inversions energize, invigorate, and evoke confidence, some of the more supported inversions help to relax and downregulate the nervous system, bringing feelings of balance and calm.

It's important to remember that arm balances and inversions are not supposed to be "hard"; in actuality, these poses are very simple, stemming from as much equanimity and ease as effort.

**Support & Safety:** If you are new to practicing arm balances and inversions, it might be a good idea to do so under the supervision of a teacher or practitioner with experience. There are many ways to modify and support our anatomy in the early stages of our evolution in these poses. Practice with care.

### Things to remember:

- Use the wall, chairs, or a friend as support.
- Be sure to warm up, then neutralize the wrists & shoulders.
- Don't get discouraged! The time of day or month, sleep or stress cycles, and even menstrual cycles all affect our ability to access certain poses at times—it's a continuous journey.

### A-dho Muk-ha Svan-asana | Downward Facing Dog

**Imagery:** Inversion, Mountain, Balance, Opening, Alignment, Connection, Inversion



### Action cues:

- Start in a tabletop, with your wrists under your shoulders and your knees under your hips.
- Spread your fingers wide and press firmly into the mat with your palms, creating a strong foundation.

- Tuck your toes under and lift your hips, straightening your arms and legs to come into an inverted V shape.
- Press your heels towards the floor, but don't worry if they don't touch – focus on lengthening your spine instead.
- Engage your quadriceps to firm your thighs.
- Keep your arms straight and strong, with your upper arm bone rotating towards your ears.
- Relax your head and neck, allowing your gaze to fall between your feet or towards your belly button.
- Press down evenly through your hands and feet to distribute your weight evenly.
- Lengthen your spine by reaching your tailbone towards the ceiling and drawing your chest towards your thighs.
- Take deep, steady breaths as you hold the pose, feeling the stretch through your back, hamstrings, and calves.
- To release, bend your knees and come back down to tabletop position, or transition into the next pose.

### **Anatomical Instructions:**

- Fingers flex to protect the wrists.
- The back arches slightly while the abdominals contract simultaneously to flex the trunk.
- Rotate thighs inward and dorsiflex the top of the feet toward the shins to press down into the heels

### **Energetic cues:**

- Yielding into the hands and the feet, feel the buoyancy in the supportive exchange of prana between you and the earth
- Draw a line of energy from the base of the spine through the crown of the head elongating the spine, while connecting to the navel center and radiating in all directions

### **Corrections:**

- ~ Shoulders hunched
- ~ Pressing into wrists
- ~ Feet too close together or too far apart
- ~ Tight lower back or hamstrings (knees bend deeply)

### **Contraindications:**

- ~ High blood pressure
- ~ Carpel tunnel syndrome, or tendinitis
- ~ Detached eye retina, weak eye capillaries
- ~ Dislocated shoulder / shoulder injury

### **Benefits:**

- ~ This pose leaves you energized and rejuvenates the body
- ~ It brings strength throughout the body especially the arms, shoulders, legs, feet
- ~ Helps to tone muscles, and opens hips, shoulders.  
Stretches hamstrings, calves and hands
- ~ Lengthens the spine, calms the mind as it increases circulation to the brain

# Restorative Yoga

'The art of deep relaxation.'

Restorative Yoga practices are gentle, meditative and slow-paced and utilize the use of Yoga props (i.e. bolsters, blocks, blankets, eye pillows). With the support of props, practitioners can rest at ease and achieve physical, mental and emotional relaxation. The restorative practice ensures that practitioners still receive all of the therapeutic benefits of the postures, effortlessly and without strain or pain.

## Benefits:

Deep relaxation, supports the release of tension from the body and mind, supports mental and emotional well-being

## Supported Child's Pose



### How to get into the pose:

- ~ Place a block towards the top of the mat on its middle height and a second block on its lowest height (shape of a T).
- ~ Position a bolster or stack of pillows on top of the blocks to create a wedge-like shape.
- ~ Sit facing the bolster with your big toes together and knees wide.
- ~ Bring a folded blanket under the ankles for support. Lean forward and rest the belly down onto the bolster.
- ~ Rest the arms down by your sides and turn the head to one side (turn to the other side half way through).
- ~ Rest for 5 minutes or longer.

### Coming Out:

- ~ Slowly lift the chest, remove the props, and extend the legs out in front.

### Variations and Modifications:

- ~ Support the knees by bringing a folded blanket under the knees.
- ~ Bring a bolster or cushion under the sitting bones to lift the hips and lessen the stress on the knees.
- ~ Bring knees together and rest belly on thighs, forehead onto a block, and wrap arms around by the sides so the shoulders can relax.

### Props needed:

- ~ Folded blanket
- ~ Bolster

## Side-Lying Savasana



### How to get into the pose:

- ~ Come to rest on the right side of the body and a folded blanket or pillow beneath the head to ensure the neck is aligned.
- ~ Gently bend the knees and bring a bolster or pillow in between the thighs, knees, or ankles for support.
- ~ Extend the arms out in front of you and rest the top arm onto a pillow. Rest in stillness for 10 minutes or longer.

### Coming Out:

- ~ Slowly press up to seated.
- ~ Option to repeat on the other side.

### Props needed:

- ~ Blanket
- ~ Pillow(s) or bolster

## Supported Savasana



### How to get into the pose:

- ~ Bring a bolster or stack of pillows to the center of the mat.
- ~ Create an incline by taking 2 blocks beneath the bolster - one on its second height, the other on its lowest height (into the shape of a T).
- ~ Create a supported wedge.
- ~ From seated, bring the lower back to the low edge of the bolster.
- ~ Place a bolster or pillow beneath the knees.
- ~ Slowly lower down on the bolster.
- ~ Open the chest and relax the arms down by your sides.

Rest in stillness for 10 minutes or longer.

### Coming Out:

- ~ Gently roll to one side of the body, either on the bolster (supported side-lying position) or rest on the floor beside the bolster.

## **Yoga Nidra: The Art of Transformational Sleep**

A journey into stillness and into Being. An effortless guided meditative technique that bring practitioners into a unique state of consciousness, also known as “yogic sleep” or “wakeful sleep”, where the body comes to rest in deep sleep while a trace sense of awareness remains.

Yoga Nidra is a state of consciousness and also a method where the techniques allow the practitioner to rest deeply, relax the thinking mind, and drop deeply into an effortless presence of being. As well as supporting physical relaxation, Yoga Nidra works deeply to nourish the mind by working on the psyche, limiting beliefs and past karmas.

### **Benefits:**

improve sleep, decrease anxiety and experience of depression, improve mood, alleviate stress, emotional resilience, enhance creativity, physical healing, enhanced energy levels, clarity and focus, peace, calm, presence and so much more. Research has shown that Yoga Nidra can reduce chronic pain, depression, anxiety, insomnia and PTSD.

### **10 Minute Yoga Nidra Script**

- ~ Welcome to your Yoga Nidra practice today.
- ~ Come down to rest on the back of the body in Savasana.
- ~ Close down the eyes and relax the lower jaw.
- ~ Ensure that you are comfortable and the whole body feels supported.
- ~ Take a deep breath in through the nose and exhale through the mouth.
- ~ Feel the earth beneath your body and allow the whole body to become heavy.
- ~ Quiet the thinking mind and relax into the experience of just sensing and feeling.
- ~ As you rest in stillness, allow the guidance of my voice.
- ~ Bring all of your awareness to rest on sensations present inside of the mouth. Sensing the tip of the tongue, the root of the tongue. Feel the teeth and gums. The tip of the nose. The bridge of the nose. Centre of the forehead. The eyebrows, temples, cheekbones. The right eye. The left eye. The eye lids. The right ear. The left ear. The space between the ears.
- ~ Back to the center of the forehead. Crown of the head. Back of the head.
- ~ Center of the throat. Center of the chest. Heart center. Right shoulder. Elbow. Wrist. Palm of the hand. First finger, second, third, fourth, little finger. The whole right hand. The whole right arm.
- ~ Back to the heart center. To the left shoulder. Elbow. Wrist. Palm of the hand. First finger, second, third, fourth, little finger. The whole left hand. The whole left arm.
- ~ Back to the heart center. Navel center. Pelvic center.
- ~ The right hip. Knee. Ankle. Heel. Sole of the foot. Big toe, second, third, fourth, baby toe. The whole right foot. The whole right left. Back to the pelvic center. To the left hip. Knee. Ankle. Heel. Sole of the foot. Big toe, second, third, fourth, baby toe. The whole left foot. The whole left leg. Sensing now both feet, both legs, the whole torso, both arms, hands, neck and head.
- ~ The whole body. The whole body.
- ~ And now, bring awareness to the natural rhythm of the breath. Notice, sense and feel the body breathing in, and breathing out.



“Drive your physical vehicle intelligently,  
relax perfectly,  
breathe rhythmically,  
meditate regularly,  
you will enjoy happiness, health and long life!”

~ *Swami Sivananda*