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# INTRODUCTION

## Getting It Together

Separateness causes suffering and union creates freedom. Yoga is union.

It is the separation from our Self, each other, nature, and from something greater or higher (be it God, universal consciousness, or whatever term you want to use) that causes the anxiety and chaos symptomatic of our times. It is difficult for us to experience our natural connection with each other when we don't have that connection with our own Self. Yoga connects us with an inner wisdom, in which there is no doubt as to the connection of all things.

Now is the time for yoga. Yoga is a practical method of bringing peace and connectedness back into our lives. Because we are a reflection of our nervous system, the state of our nervous system dictates how we experience the world. If the nervous system is fresh and rested, the body will be healthy and the mind alert and comprehensive. As a result, our thought will be powerful and clear and our actions, which are manifested thought, will be successful and rewarding.

Yoga strengthens and purifies the nervous system so it can reflect a greater degree of consciousness and our lives can become an increasingly positive force in the world. If the methods presented in this manual are practiced correctly the whole nervous system is revitalized, the body enjoys better health and more energy, the mind is rested and freed from the endless burdensome thought of future and past, and perception is restored to its primal freshness.

We can actually gain back the connection to Self and others as we are released from the restricted thinking, dull mind, and negativity resulting from a strained, tired nervous system. The healthier our nervous system, the healthier our body, mind, thoughts and actions.

The purpose of this manual is to make these techniques available to all who are interested in enhancing the quality of their lives from the most fundamental foundation, the inner source. The idea is to promote self-practice and self-responsibility, to offer a tool for re-connecting. This is the place where yoga truly begins in each of our own individual lives. Yoga helps you rise to the challenge of living.



*You can't diligently practice yoga, honing the clarity of your mind, and fail to be struck by the very humorous-albeit pathetic predicament we're all in. We find ourselves chained to the wheel of karma, going round and round in our own private illusory worlds, struggling to glimpse reality and attain eternal peace. It's funny and maddeningly difficult, and sad, too, sometimes. It's also the only game in town and nobody gets out alive.*

*From The Five Tibetans*

## THE HISTORY OF ASHTANGA YOGA



As the story goes, the *ashtanga yoga* system was reconstructed from a mysterious manuscript written on a bundle of palm leaves, the *Yoga Korunta*. This collection of verses on *hatha yoga* was discovered in the 1930's by yoga master and Sanskrit scholar Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya and his disciple K. Pattabhi Jois while researching Sanskrit texts at a Calcutta university library. The manuscript is dated to be between 500 and 1,500 year old.

Krishnamacharya and Jois translated and reconstructed the *ashtanga yoga* series (originally there were six sequences of postures) and Pattabhi Jois, with the encouragement of Krishnamacharya, took the instructions as the basis of his practice and teaching. He is still teaching this method today in Mysore, India at the age of 80.

*Ashtanga* taught by Pattabhi Jois is a form of *hatha yoga* which focuses on *asana* (posture) and *pranayama* (breath control). Some people call this *ashtanga vinyasa yoga* in order to distinguish between Patanjali's eightfold system and the *ashtanga yoga* described in this manual.

# AWAKENING THE FIRE WITHIN

## ***Vinyasa: Movement Breathing System***

*Ashtanga yoga* wakes up the internal fire. It ignites the dormant flame of vital life energy within all of us. The *vinyasa* system works with the synchronization of deep, rhythmic breathing and movement. By linking the postures it creates a continuous flow of energy that heats up the body, bringing oxygen to the blood, nourishing the glands and internal organs, cleansing and purifying the nervous system, releasing unwanted toxins through perspiration. As the heat goes up toxins are burned up and out of the system, creating a lighter and stronger body, and a clear mind. The heat is not only a physical experience, it is an internal spiritual fire that burns through the fog of illusion and ignorance.

## **Access All Areas**

As the internal heat goes up, not only do the toxins begin to exit the system, but another amazing thing happens; the body begins to bend and move. As Pattabhi Jois says “even iron will bend with heat.” With this freedom of movement we are able to open up areas of the body that had been previously restricted or blocked. There is a release, a feeling of lightness. It is in these places that we can discover what yoga truly is. Yoga is not just a physical exercise or some new way to pass the time or fill the emptiness, but a method of bringing life and vitality back into those areas, awareness of the deeper, inner parts of ourselves. It is a re-union with that innate wisdom that we all possess, but seem to have lost touch with. Yoga was developed as a means of acknowledging or returning to the source of life.

As concentration increases, the breath, mind, body, and soul come into union, to entrainment. *Ashtanga yoga* is a focusing technique that joins the main life forces, beating in unison to an internal rhythm, your internal rhythm. With control of the breath, the mind becomes calm, allowing one to tap into a flow state where there is no sense of time, where externally imposed barriers dissolve and there is a sense of oneness with the universe. As focus increases, there is an effortlessness, a lightness in the harmony of movement and breathing.



*It is in the very cavern of our heart that we can realize the immensity of spaces, and by controlling our own vital rhythms that we can escape the power of time. It is by reaching the source of life that we can escape the power of death. It is by exploring the unknown spheres within ourselves that we can visit the celestial and infernal worlds.*

*Alain Danielou*

# THE BREATH OF LIFE

## Feeding The Fire

In many languages the words for spirit and breath are the same. In Sanskrit it's *prana*, in Latin, *spiritus*, and in Hebrew, *ruach*. In Portuguese the word for taking in breath is *inspiration*, or spirit-in. They believe that an infant literally breathes its spirit into its body with its first breath. We breathe in life. Breath is the source of life and vitality. It is the spirit moving in rhythm in the body.



*When the breath wanders, the mind is unsteady, but when the breath is still, so is the mind still.*

*Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

## The Victorious Breath • Ujjayi Breathing

Breath is the fuel that feeds the internal fire, gives it life, keeps the flame going. The vital life energy, *prana*, is controlled by the breath. In *ashtanga yoga*, *ujjayi* breathing (victorious breath) is used to enrich *prana*. By breathing through the nose, with the mouth closed, the breath is felt from the throat, producing a hissing sound. This sound of the breath keeps the mind focused. As the mind begins to wander, the sound of the breath keeps bringing you back home and away from the mumbling, stumbling mind. The mind becomes focused and calm as each pose flows into the next in concert with the breath. The breath is the link between body and mind.

## PRACTICE

### Ujjayi Breathing

1. Sit in a comfortable meditative pose or lie in *savasana*. Become aware of the natural breathing process and feel the air passing down through the windpipe. Slightly contract the region at the back of the throat as you do when you swallow. Inhale and exhale through the nose with the mouth closed. Make the inhalation and exhalation long, deep and controlled. Practice full yogic breathing and concentrate on the sound. Begin practicing for 3 minutes and progressively work your way up to 10 minutes.
2. Practice as above, but fold the tongue back so that the tip of the tongue presses the back of the soft palate on the roof of the mouth.
3. As you inhale say “sa” to yourself and as you exhale say “ha.” Repeat ten times. Inhalation and exhalation should be of equal duration, smooth and relaxed.
4. Notice your mind wandering as you practice breathing and keep bringing your mind back to the breath.
5. Focus on the exhalation. Notice where your breath normally stops. Increase the fullness of the exhalation.

# PRANA

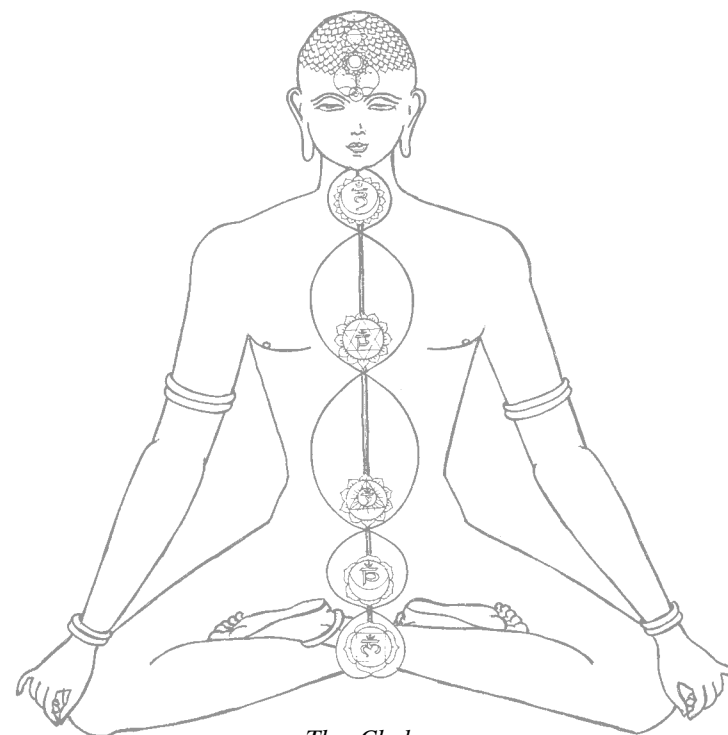
*Prana* is a subtle form of energy. *Prana* literally means “breathing forth” the universal life force. Through practicing *asana* and *pranayama*, *prana* is brought into and stored in the body, increasing vitality. *Prana* mainly flows through the body in the *nadis*, or nerve channels of the astral body.

*Prana* exists as a negative energy as well as a positive energy. *Prana* moves upward and *apana* moves downward. When the two unite at the *muladhara chakra* (base of spine) *kundalini* (dormant cosmic energy) is awakened.

The most important *nadi*, or energy channel, (there are 72,000!) is the *shushumna nadi* which correlates to the spinal cord in the physical body. When *kundalini* is awakened it starts to move up the *shushumna nadi*, through the seven *chakras* toward higher states of consciousness.

In *ashtanga yoga* there are three locks (*bandhas*) that are engaged throughout the practice to prevent the dissipation of, and direct the flow of *prana* in the body, and convert it into spiritual energy.

- *Jalandhara bandha* prevents *prana* from escaping the upper body.
- *Uddiyana bandha* forces *prana* up the *shushumna nadi*.
- *Mula bandha*, when engaged, prevents *apana* escaping from the lower body and draws it up to unite with *prana*.



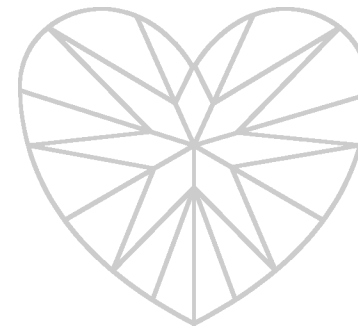
*The Chakras*

*From bottom to top the 7 chakras:*

1. *Muladhara chakra* - at the anus
2. *Svadhishthana chakra* - at the genitals
3. *Manipura chakra* - at the navel
4. *Anahata chakra* - at the heart
5. *Vishuddha chakra* - at the throat
6. *Ajna chakra* - between and behind the eyebrows
7. *Sahasrara chakra* - at the crown of the head

## A CHAKRA CONTEMPLATION

1. *Muladhara* (foundation or root): *mula bandha*/perineum for men, entrance to the womb/cervix for women • red • grounding and personal security, connection to the earth, *Yamas*
2. *Svadhithana* (dwelling place of the self): *uddiyana bandha*, genitals, tail bone to lower abdomen • orange • generative, procreation, emotions, *Niyamas*
3. *Manipura* (city of gems): navel to solar plexus (sternum) • yellow • power, physical strength, belongingness, *Asanas*
4. *Anahata* (unstricken or liberated): heart, center of chest • green • agape (unconditional love), compassion, healing, breathing, *Pranayama*
5. *Vishuddha* (pure): *jalandhara bandha*, throat • blue • verbal communication, logical, linear thought, left hemisphere active mode of consciousness, *Pratyahara*
6. *Ajna* (unlimited authority): the third eye, forehead • indigo • illusion of separateness and duality ceases, intuition and creativity, right hemisphere receptive mode of consciousness, *Dharana*
7. *Sahasrara* (thousand petal white lotus): the crown of the head • violet • connection to the cosmos, individual dissolves into universal consciousness, enlightenment, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*  
– Prepared by *johannes Van Vugt*

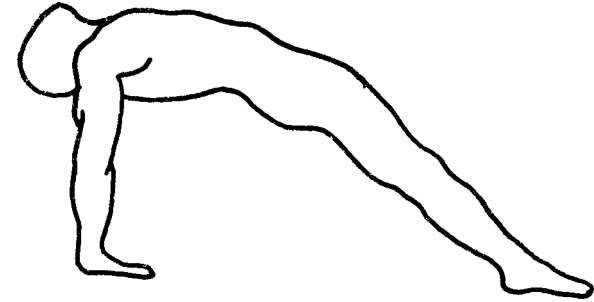


# THE PRIMARY SERIES

## XV *PURVOTTANASANA* • INTENSE EAST STRETCH

*Purva*=east *Uttana*=intense stretch

1. Exhale, place hands 1 ft behind hips, palms flat on floor, fingers pointing towards feet.
2. Inhale, lift body up supporting weight with hands and soles of feet. Tuck pelvis, toes to floor. Arms straight, head back. Lift hips emphatically, bring inside edges of feet together and knees together. Look back and up between eyebrows.  
*Drishti*: 3rd eye.  
Hold posture for 5-8 breaths.
3. Exhale down.  
Modified posture: if neck feels strained, keep chin to chest.



## VINYASA TO SITTING

Legs extended straight out in front

## XVI *ARDHA BADDHA PADMA PASCHIMOTTANASANA*

### • HALF BOUND LOTUS FORWARD BEND

*Ardha*=half *Baddha*=bound *Padma*=lotus

1. Inhale, bring right heel into the navel before lowering knee to get leg as high up on thigh as possible. Try to keep both shoulders level with each other, pull scapula back and down the spine.
2. Exhale, right arm around behind back and clasp toes on right foot, left index finger and thumb holding left big toe.
3. Inhale, head up, look up between eyebrows.
4. Exhale, bend forward, staying in half bound lotus, chin to shin or knee.  
*Drishti*: nose  
Hold for 5-8 breaths.
5. Inhale, come up.  
Modified posture: forget half bound lotus! Place right foot onto left thigh and bring both hands to left foot as you bend forward. If right foot doesn't go on top of thigh, just place foot on inside of left thigh.  
Repeat other side.



## VINYASA TO SITTING