

## **Our Philosophy is Simple:**

Each person has within them their OWN Yoga: We aim to help each person find what is best for them.

The word YOGA means to unite: Yoga brings together breath, movement and mindfulness.

Yoga in and of itself has no purpose only that which the person gives it: So if the focus is gaining health, that will be the purpose for that person. If it is stress relief then that will be what is achieved. You get the idea:

Yoga to be effective needs to be practiced on a regular basis: You need to build a daily routine: Here are some suggestions on how to do this:

### **Building Your Own Daily Practice:**

There are four simple steps to follow:

- Step 1 The beginning of a practice starts with a check-in process, to bring into your awareness all of the parts of your body.

As you check-in simply allow the body part to come into your awareness. Sometimes using an anatomical chart is useful to identify the part, however simply allowing the body part to speak to you is as effective. Do not rush, there are no timetables, there are 208 bones in the body and around 640 muscles, not that you have to check in every time with every one, the body is quite used to being viewed in groups and the check in list below is very helpful.

- Step 2 As you sit in Check bring your hands into Apan Vayu Mudra.
- Step 3 Each asana begins and ends with a flow of movement of the hands back to the heart, gathering and circulating energy of the heart throughout the body.
- Step 4 Breathe. As you inhale you expand and move. As you exhale you contract. Each Inhale should be about half the length of the exhale. If

you inhale for a count of 5 then the exhale should be a count of ten. If at first this is difficult just continue to practice and it will get easier.

More detail:

**Step One Check In with where you are now.**

1. Create a space in which you can relax. Medium to low light is advised.
2. Sit in a quiet, comfortable position, this need not be with your legs crossed. If you have a mat then sit on it. Bring your fingers into Apan Vayu Mudra.

3. Begin to "check" in with your body.

Start with the toes

The tops of your feet

The underside of your feet

Your ankles

Your calves and shins (tibia and fibula)

Your knees (patella)

Your Thighs (femur)

Your hips (pelvis)

Your belly and all of the organs contained within, stomach, intestines, bladder etc., sex organs as well

Your Spine (try to count each vertebra, usually 27)

Your Chest, ribs, lungs and heart

Your Throat, larynx,

Clavicles, shoulders and shoulder blades (scapulas)

Your arms, biceps, triceps, elbow, forearm, wrists, hands and fingers

Your jaw, mouth, tongue, lips

Your nose, eyes, ears, scalp, hair

Often a body part not included in the list will pop into your mind during the check-in. Pay special attention to this part and linger with it a while as it may need some love and extra attention today..

## Apan Vayu Mudra

This Mudra is made in this way – fold the index finger of your hand, and press it to the base of the thumb. Next, touch the finger tips of the middle finger and the ring finger together with the tip of the thumb, and keep the little finger straight. The Mudra has to be made by both the hands.

Apan Vayu Mudra for heart conditioning.

If done regularly for 45 minutes daily in three stretches of 15 minutes each in morning, afternoon and evening, it is helpful for many heart diseases. When air element increases in the body, it causes constriction of heart arteries; they become hard and narrow. Doing this Mudra will relieve arteriosclerosis of the heart, and thus strengthens the heart muscles and remove blockages in arteries.

- It relieves angina immediately.
- It normalizes blood pressure and thus saves us from both high as well as low blood pressure, as it stimulates the circulatory system.
- In case of palpitations or weak pulse, this Mudra will normalize the pulse rate immediately.
- It also reduces nervousness, as it quietens / calms the nervous system.
- It helps in relieving acidity, gas formation, eructation, belching, and strengthens the digestive system. It solves all diseases of the intestines, colic, colitis, etc;
- It is highly effective in respiratory diseases like asthma. This Mudra, by cleansing the blood circulatory system, also helps the lungs in their functioning. People who suffer from difficult breathing while climbing stairs or walking fast should do this Mudra for about 10 minutes before climbing stairs; they will feel much better.
- It is also highly effective in curing migraine. Migraine or headache is primarily due to weak digestion or excited nerves. As already mentioned, this Mudra quietens the nervous system and strengthens digestive system therefor leaving no cause for migraine.
- By soothing the nervous system, it induces sleep and cures insomnia.
- According to Ayurveda, any imbalance in the three “doshas” – Vata, Pitta and Kapha causes diseases. Apan Vayu Mudra restores balance in these

three 'doshas'. Apan Vayu Mudra stimulates and strengthens the blood circulatory system – digestive system, respiratory system, excretory system and the nervous system.

Apan Vayu Mudra is a very helpful mudra in our daily lives and also in emergencies like heart attack. It should be practiced for 45 minutes a day – in 3 phases of 15 minutes each. If practiced regularly over a long period of time, it is helpful in a number of heart ailments.

### Yogic Breathing.

Begin to focus on your breathing, notice how is now, as it is when you are relaxed and then bring mindfulness to this breathing, deepen the breath and begin three part breathing and the Yogic breath.

We always breath in and out through the nose. The nose is specially designed for the job,. It has filters yes there is a reason for nose hair and now you know it. It gently warms the air before it is carried to the lungs. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by utilizing the diaphragm, which when descending, exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen.

Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs breast, bone and chest.

Now fill the higher portion of the lungs, expanding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs.

In the final movement, the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in which gives the lungs support and helps to fill the highest part of the lungs.

This inhalation is continuous, the entire chest cavity from the lowered diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collar bone, being expanded with a uniform movement.

Remember to avoid a jerky series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements and will result in a uniform continuous breath.

Retain the breath for a few seconds at the top and bottom of the breathing cycle. Do not hold the breath rather relax and allow the breath to be in the body.

As you do so become aware of your whole body and notice how the energy of the breath moves through your body. This may be difficult at first as it is rather subtle and most of us live at a gross level unaware of the movements in our body. However as you relax and practice more it will become second nature to you.

Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position and drawing the abdomen in a little; lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs.

When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen.

Repeat this for a minimum of three times before taking the next step of moving.

## Step Two Preparing for movement:

It is important that you begin to warm the body and bring oxygen and blood to all the body parts. We begin by stretching the body with the appropriate Asanas.

As you deepen your practice overtime, these comfortable Asanas will also deepen. As your awareness grows you will find deep still places within them.

After you are deeply comfortable move in the sitting posture Inhale and move to hands and knees. Here we will begin to warm the body, preparing for deeper movement.

Once you are on your hands and knees do three rounds of Cat (Marjariasana) and Cow (Gomukasana) Asana

We begin the movement by bring warmth into the spine to increase flexibility.

Begin the posture on your hands and knees. Make sure your hands are directly below your shoulder and that they are shoulder width apart and your knees below your hips. Open your knees a little so your body is more stable.

Exhale: Now raise your back up by pressing down through the palms of your hands on the mat. Lift your back upward out of your shoulders. Lower your head down and look at the floor between your knees. Bring your hips towards your knees. This position imitates the back bend of a scared cat. Keep the back arched up high but soften and relax.

As you exhale gently squeeze the stomach towards the spine and squeeze the buttocks together. See if you can obtain a fluid rippling motion as you do so.

Inhale: Now sag into your shoulders lowering the center of your back down as your hips rotate raising your bottom up in the air. The head comes up at the same time. Look upward. This is the Cow posture, imitating a Sacred Cow.

Come into active Child pose (Balaasana)

Spread the knees as wide as the mat or as wide as you can, keeping the big toes touching.

Bring the belly to rest between the thighs exhale and your forehead to the floor.

There are two possible arm variations: Stretched or Relaxed. In stretched they are placed out in front of you and in relaxed they are placed behind you at your sides.

Take three deep cleansing breaths. Truly allow your self to relax.

Come into Rabbit Asana (Sasangasa)

With your forehead still touching the floor, inhale your arms wide out to the sides of your body. Palms facing backwards. Slowly exhale and bring your hands alongside of your body. Gently wrap your hands around both heels.

Inhale and soften and stabilize your shoulders and as you inhale raise your head from the floor and begin to stretch and allow the spine to elongate.

Imagine your neck to be like that of turtles coming out its shell. Curl your neck bringing the crown of the head to the floor and the forehead to your knees.

Squeeze the body down tightly and fully exhale

Inhale and Flow into Hero Asana (Virasana)

From Sasangasa inhale your arms wide out to the sides of your body and begin to raise your upper body from the floor. Stretch your arms out wide and feel the energy surrounding your body. Allow the sacrum or the base of your spine to nestle in between your heels so that you are sitting upright. Continue to allow the shins to melt into the mat or floor.

Flow into Downward Dog (Adho Mukha Svanasana)

Come to your hands and knees with the wrists underneath the shoulders and the knees underneath the hips. Curl the toes under and push back raising the hips and straightening the legs. Spread the fingers and ground down from the forearms into the fingertips.

Outwardly rotate the upper arms broadening the collarbones. Let the head hang, move the shoulder blades away from the ears towards the hips. Engage the quadriceps strongly to take the weight off the arms, making this a resting Asana. Rotate the thighs inward, keep the tail high and sink your heels to the floor.

Do not step the feet toward the hands in Down Dog in order to get the heels to the floor. This will happen eventually as the muscles lengthen. Begin to walk the feet to hands slowly. You may have to crouch in tight and that is fine. Touch your fingertips to your toes, imagine closing a circuit in your mind as you exhale squeeze your belly towards your spine. Inhale and slowly raise up curling through the spine one vertebrae at a time. Bring the palms of your hands together as you do.

Imagine bringing the energy up the center line of your body, rolling the energy over your heart. The hands eventually come over your head and flow into a slight back bend.

Flow into Standing Mountain Asana (Tadasana)

Bring the hands back to the heart in prayer position standing with the big toes touching. Lift up all your toes and let them fan out, then drop them down creating a wide solid base. Bring your weight evenly onto all four corners of both feet. Let the feet and the calves root down into the floor. Rotate both thighs inwards creating a widening of the sit bones and tuck your tailbone in between the sit bones. Tone the belly, drawing it in towards the spine. Widen the collarbones and stack the shoulder girdle on top of the pelvic girdle. The neck is long, the crown of the head rises towards the ceiling and the shoulder blades slide down the back. Place your hands into prayer position on the heart. As you breath in imagine that you can feel a connection with the earth. As you breath in the energy of the earth is following into your heart. As you exhale the energy of the heaven above your head is flowing into your heart and that you are standing there perfectly balanced between heaven and earth.

Flow into Intense Standing Side Stretch (Ardha Chandrasana)

Inhale the right arm up and over the head as you do the forearm and wrists turn so that you can massage the left ear. The elbow should be above the crown of the head and bicep close to the right ear. As you exhale you then

allow the left shoulder to slide towards the floor. Increase the weight in the right foot to keep balanced.

As the left hand reaches the knee, or at your edge, which is the point at which you sense that you have to pause, open the right arm up, breathe and allow gravity to intensify the stretch. You may feel a lengthening out of the right hip, knee and ankle but it could also be in related muscles.

Repeat on the left side.

Breathe and come back to center into Tadasana. Flow the arms to the outside sweep them overhead and back into prayer position over the heart.

Flow into Forward Bend (Uttanasana)

As you exhale begin to swan dive the arms out to the side while folding forward. Make sure the fold comes from the hips, deepening the hip creases, and not from the back. Bring the fingertips in line with the toes and press the palms flat. Engage the quadriceps muscles of the thighs. Bring your weight a little bit forward into the balls of your feet so that your hips stay over the ankles. Let your head hang. Allow gravity to lengthen you fold.

In the beginning you may wish to first fold so that the arms come to the knees and then gradually extend the arms to the floor.

Now you are ready for deeper movement and this maybe where a class will come in handy or not: Just feel where your body wants to move and witness it going there and how your mind is involved in the process: Once the two are working in harmony with your breath, you are doing YOGA:

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