

Take Action

Yoga Sequence

Part One: Prepare

This is a step by step guide for an individual practice. The sequence as presented takes about 15-20 min. You may want to practice one or two poses at first, then build stamina while adding more; eventually doing all in the order listed. Yoga literally means the union of the body and the mind. Your practice is a time for you to be present and to use your body as a tool and a vehicle to clear your mind. The poses will ensure a reduction in anxiety and stress. The results will be apparent even with a little bit of practice. Enjoy.



1. **Breath.** The most important part of doing yoga is your breath, your prana.
 - a) While you move through the poses, regulate your breathing so the timing of each inhale is the same as each exhale.
 - b) Breathe through your nose with your mouth closed until the last pose. This invites more oxygen into the system and allows your body to heat up quicker. End your practice with open mouthed breathing.
 - c) Connect to your breath *off the mat*....Realize the power you have over any situation when you control your breathing. When a stressful situation arises, center yourself and breathe.

2. **Practice.** When doing the poses below, you will need to be in a quiet space with enough room for you to stand, about the width of your arms when opened wide. The practice of doing yoga will center you and bring you to an inward place for reflection and restorative healing. With even a little practice you'll feel amazing, we promise!
 - a) Wear comfortable clothing, bare feet and use a mat if you have one but the floor is fine.
 - b) It's best to practice yoga on a light stomach so drink plenty of water and prepare to eat after.

3. **Mindfulness.**
 - a) Focus on the present moment.
 - b) Practice non judgement.
 - c) Let it go.
 - d) Connect.
 - e) Find your peace.

Part One: Practice

15 min. Sequence:

Remember, controlled breathing is the most important thing you will do.

1. Lotus Pose or Padmasana

- a) Sit cross legged with your back straight. Breathe.
- b) Bend your right knee, then rotate it outward from the hip.
- c) Roll your left thigh open and, while supporting your right ankle with your hands, begin to draw your right ankle into your groin.
- d) Keep your left leg rotated open and bend your left knee, bringing your heel in toward your navel.
- e) Breathe five inhales and exhales in this pose.
- f) Close your eyes. Feel the alignment of your body in this position.



2. Salute to the Sun or Sun Salutation (*Surya Namaskar* Sanskrit: सूर्यनमस्कार IAST: *Sūrya Namaskār*)

This practice incorporates a sequence of some twelve gracefully linked asanas. The asana sequence originated in the Hatha Yoga tradition in the 9th century in India. The basic sequence involves moving from a standing position into Downward and Upward Dog poses and then back to the standing position, but many variations are possible.

The set of 12 asanas is dedicated to the vedic-hindu solar deity Surya. In some Indian traditions, the positions are each associated with a different mantra. When practicing the poses, meditate on gratitude for the sun which makes all life on earth possible.

- a) **Begin and End** stand tall, feet together on ground, hands together at chest. Heart center.
- b) **Inhale** lift arms up high over head, arch back.
- c) **Exhale** chest forward and knees slightly bent, fold in.
- d) **Inhale** come up halfway, with a flat back.
- e) **Exhale** both feet back in plank back straight with shoulders over wrists.
- f) **Exhale continued** lower knees, chest, chin to floor; hips high and elbows in.
- g) **Inhale** straighten legs, hips forward, bend slightly at waist. Lift chest.

- h) **Exhale** lift tailbone, push back. Keep back straight, knees slightly bent.
- i) **Inhale** feet forward between hands. Slightly bend legs. Fold in.
- j) **Exhale** come up halfway to flat back.
- k) **Inhale** raise torso, extend arms over head, arch back.
- l) Repeat 3-5 times.



3. Tadasana Mountain Pose or Samasthiti (*Sanskrit: तडासन; LAST: Tādāsana*),

This is a **standing asana** in modern **yoga** and is the basis for several other standing Asanas.

- a) Stand tall with feet together.
- b) Straighten your back and let arms hang to the side.
- c) Relax your shoulders.
- d) Lift your toes then release.
- e) Feel the connection from the earth to your body.

4. Crescent Lunge

This is a dynamic standing **yoga** pose that utilizes and integrates the muscles in your entire body. It stretches and strengthens the lower and upper body, while creating stability and balance.

- a) Feet are wide facing the same direction.
- b) Push toes off back foot into the ground.
- c) Lift arms wide, extend over head, fingers spread chest open.
- d) Engage your core.
- e) Breathe.



5. Triangle Pose

Triangle Pose is a standing asana in modern yoga that strengthens the knees, thighs and ankles.

- Stand with your feet about as wide as your hips.
- Pivot one foot so the heel of the front foot aligns with the center of the back foot as if bisecting it, making a triangle.
- Align your torso so it's facing out the same direction as your legs.
- Open your arms out wide and lower your open hand to the foot and raise the other arm. Feel the connection from one hand to the other as like an imaginary line. Open both hands facing the same way.
- Open your heart center. With every movement, regulate your breath.
- Repeat on the other side.



6. Revolved Triangle (*parivrtta* = to turn around, *revolve trikona* = three angle or triangle)

Done properly and consistently, there are many benefits to this **triangle pose** stretching legs, muscles around the knee, ankle joints, hips, groin muscles, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest and spine. It strengthens legs, knees, ankles, abdominals, obliques and back and stimulates function of abdominal organs.

- Follow the steps above for triangle pose.
- Instead of facing the same direction as your open foot, twist your body and lower your hand outside the foot. Move your arm like a windmill as you lower. Only go as low as what's comfortable.
- Breathe as you move through the pose.
- Repeat on the other side.



7. Dandasa: Staff Pose

The Benefits of Staff Pose: Helps improve posture, strengthens back muscles, lengthens and stretches the spine, shoulders and chest. This pose nourishes your body's resistance to back and hip injuries, helps calm brain cells, improves functionality of the digestive organs, creates body awareness and helps improve alignment of body.

- a) Sit on the floor with legs touching, extended and toes flexed.
- b) Place your hands on the ground next to your hips.
- c) Sit tall and align your posture.
- d) Pull the legs toward the ground as you breathe into the pose.
- e) Breathe and count five full inhales and exhales.



8. Seated Spinal Twist (Sanskrit name, "Ardha Matsyendrasana" "Ardha" — meaning "half" "Matsya" meaning "fish")

This restorative yoga pose promotes good digestion and encourages spinal mobility. Twisting postures help tone the belly, massage internal organs and can help relieve lower back pain. Often performed towards the end of a sequence, this pose is simultaneously relaxing and invigorating.



- a) Seat flat on the ground in staff pose.
- b) Then, bring one leg underneath the other and tuck in like a half cross legged pose.
- c) Take your other leg and bend the knee pulling your foot flat on the ground on the outside of your other knee.
- d) Raise your arms and twist your arms over the bent knee facing the opposite direction.
- e) Place the other hand behind you on the ground for balance.
- f) Breathe through the pose drawing in deeper to the twist with each breath.
- g) Repeat on the other side.

9. Legs up the Wall

This pose also gives blood circulation a gentle boost toward the upper body and head, which creates a pleasant rebalancing after you have been standing or sitting for a long time. If you are stressed, fatigued, or jet-lagged, this pose is especially refreshing. But its true greatness is that it teaches us experientially that positive results can come from doing less, not more. Many of us have been trained to believe we must work hard in order to reap the benefits of any particular effort, whether it is practicing yoga, being married, or running a business. The benefits of this pose come not just from inverting an action but also from inverting the whole notion of action. When you relax with your legs up the wall, you are practicing the polar opposite of activity, which is receptivity.



Pose Benefits: Alleviates headaches, boosts energy, soothes menstrual cramps (some yoga traditions advise against doing this pose during menstruation). It also relieves lower-back pain, and reduces symptoms relating to glaucoma, hypertension, and hernia.

1. Lie on your back with your bottom close to the wall.

2. Put your legs up on the wall and lay your arms flat on the ground next to you.
3. Breathe. Stay in this pose for about 8-10 breaths.

10. Corpse Pose

Savasana allows your body and mind time to process what has happened during a yoga class. It provides a necessary counterpoint to the effort you put forth during asana practice. You may also practice Savasana at home before sleeping as a way to quiet your mind and get more restful sleep. You may want a blanket or light covering as your body will be cooling down.

1. Lie flat on your back.
2. Let your legs fall open and arms fall open to either side palms up.
3. With your eyes closed, rest for 15-20 breaths.
4. Breathe in through your nose, and out through your mouth.
5. Relax. Be present. Notice how your body feels.
6. After about 5 minutes, turn to your side and rest in a fetal position before opening your eyes. Stay here for a few breaths.
7. Bring yourself back to lotus. Honor yourself. Show yourself gratitude for taking the time to practice yoga.





Stacey Allaire

“We are far now from home, and weary from our travels. The sun is setting and there is no destination in sight. Yoga is a lamp lit in the window of our home, dimly glimpsed across spiritual wilderness in which we wander. At a time when we could not feel further from our home, yoga reminds us that we are already there, that we need simply awaken from our dream of separation, our dream of imperfection. Allow this to awaken you, to be a light that shines in the darkness, guiding you through your days, pointing you home.”