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KOSTA: DIRECTOR, VIKASA YOGA, KHO SAMUI, THAILAND

Everything is possible
There are remarkable opportunities everywhere and in every moment. Some of them are inside of us and some are outside. Humanity is realizing its power to change itself from the inside out and help each other to find better ways of living. For many of us that knowledge deepens with our yoga practice and it feels like discovering something that we’ve known all along. As we practice, realizations come and transformations take place, revealing the potential inside of us and in this world. New understandings quickly impel us to actualize our dreams, the importance of embodying appreciation, to let life flow, and selflessly help others.

Your participation in Vikasa yoga teacher training is a huge manifestation of this. Did you find our teacher training because you want to spread the benefits of yoga? Or, because yoga makes you feel more in tune and on the right path?

The gift of yoga is what awakens peoples’ awareness to create the opportunities to know profound peace, deep inner bliss, and limitless self-freedom.

AFFIRMATION:
The teachers and students will support each other’s goals and remind one another of the opportunities we have; to learn, to grow, to spread happiness by inner peace, to embody yoga.

WHAT IS AN OPEN MINDED APPROACH TO YOGA?
Vikasa is the Sanskrit word for evolution. Just as life seems to discover virtually infinite new and successful variations, we see yoga practice as a process of evolution, discovering new ways to be present and wholly harmonious beings. The style of our teachers is integrative, never excluding other styles or techniques, but rather incorporating, refining, and creating the practices we find that generate new awareness and self-development.

By experimenting with many yogic techniques and philosophies you will learn those which are universally applicable and which are more specialized. You’ll develop your own style and hopefully see that no matter how different, all yoga practices lead to the same place. As you learn the logical steps which encompass all yoga practices, you will feel your own spiritual compass enlighten.

It is our goal with Vikasa teacher training to awaken an intuitive navigation which will make you an enthusiastic, highly motivated and focused practitioner, and become an inspiring and knowledgeable teacher with a drive to continue on your evolutionary path beyond even your own aspirations.
WHAT IS YOGA?

THE SIMPLE DEFINITION OF YOGA IS TO ‘YOKE’ - JOINING, AS IN A UNION.

ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, YOGA IS A MEANS OF BALANCING AND HARMONIZING THE BODY, MIND AND EMOTIONS. MODERN CULTURES PRIMARILY RECOGNISE THE PHYSICAL LIMB OF YOGA, HATHA YOGA. YOGA HOWEVER, IS MUCH MORE COMPLEX THAN THE MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF IT.

“Yoga is the journey of the self, through the self, to the self.”
- The Bhagavad Gita
2.1 | PERSPECTIVES ON YOGA

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
The word yoga means ‘unity’ or ‘oneness’ and is derived from the Sanskrit word yuj, which means ‘to join’ (yolk). This unity, or joining, is described in spiritual terms as the union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. This is done through the practice of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, shatkarma and meditation, and must be achieved before union can take place with the higher reality.

SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE
Yoga is the science of living and, as such, is intended to be incorporated in daily life. Yoga works on all aspects of the person: the physical, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual.

The science of yoga begins to work on the outermost aspect of the personality, the physical body, which for most people is a practical and familiar starting point. When imbalance is experienced at this level, the organs, muscles and nerves no longer function in harmony; rather they act in opposition to each other. For instance, the endocrine system might become irregular and the efficiency of the nervous system decrease to such an extent that a disease will manifest. Yoga aims to bring the different bodily functions into perfect coordination so that they work for the good of the whole body.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE
From the physical body, yoga moves onto the mental and emotional levels. Many people suffer from phobias and neuroses as a result of the stresses and interactions of everyday living. Yoga cannot provide a cure for everyday life, but it does present a proven method for coping with it.

Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh explained yoga as an “...integration and harmony between thought, feeling and deed, or integration between head, heart and hand”. Through the practices of yoga, awareness develops of the interconnectedness between the emotional, mental and physical levels, and how a disturbance in any one of these affects the others. Gradually this awareness leads to an understanding of the more subtle areas of existence.

Classic Definitions of Yoga

PATANJALI, YOGA SUTRAS I.2:
“Yoga Citta Vritti Nirodaha” - “Yoga is to still the movements of the mind”

YOGA AND BUDDHISM:
“Yoga is the end of suffering”

SWAMI SIVANANDA SARASWATI OF RISHIKESH EXPLAINED YOGA AS...
“...an integration and harmony between thought, feeling and deed, or integration between head, heart and hand”.

8 | VIKASA YOGA - Foundation Teacher Training Manual - An Introduction to Yoga
PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are many branches of yoga: raja, hatha, jnana, karma, bhakti, mantra, kundalini and laya, to name but a few, and many texts explain them in detail. Each individual needs to find those yogas most suited to his or her particular personality and need. In the last half of the twentieth century, hatha yoga has become the most well-known and widely practised of the systems. However, the concept of what constitutes yoga is broadening as more people take it up, and this knowledge is spreading.

In the ancient texts, hatha yoga consists of the shatkarmas, cleansing practices only. Today, however, hatha yoga commonly embraces the practices of asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha as well.

MODERN PERSPECTIVE

In recent decades modern yoga has seen many changes, largely by the inclusion of other forms of physical movement attaching a resemblance of asana to them, modification of asana and sequences, and the removal of philosophical perspectives and other limbs of Yoga, so much so to the point that some activities that are titled yoga barely resemble even the most basic principles of hatha yoga.

While including facets of hatha yoga in other forms of Physical Culture can be seen as an honorary respect for the traditions of yoga, however, as a responsible and honest yoga teacher, one must continually practice self awareness and be mindful to know what to title yoga and what not to. This aspect is fundamentally important to the purpose of yoga.

Yoga is probably needed more now in modern society than it ever was and it is now becoming an accepted part of modern life. By preserving the traditions and methods of yoga, many more people can reap the significantly important benefits and joys that it brings to individuals and the masses alike.

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2.2 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOGA?

IN ANCIENT TIMES HATHA YOGA WAS PRACTISED FOR MANY YEARS AS A PREPARATION FOR HIGHER STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS. TODAY, HOWEVER, THE REAL PURPOSE OF THIS ANCIENT SCIENCE IS BEING LOST. - Hatha Yoga Pradipika

The hatha yoga practices, which were designed by the rishis and sages of old for the evolution of mankind, are now only understood and utilized in a limited sense. Often we hear people say, “Oh I don’t practise meditation. I only practise physical yoga, hatha yoga.” Now the time has come to correct this point. hatha yoga is a very important science for humanity today.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF HATHA YOGA

In the last forty years, hatha yoga has been accepted as a therapeutic science all over the world and many scientific studies have been conducted in this field. Today we teach yoga to people because it is very necessary; Man has become sick and medical science is not able to meet the challenge. Hatha yoga, however, has been helping everybody – so we do not want to discourage this ‘health’ aspect – but at the same time, we should not forget what hatha yoga really stands for.

“Behind every sick man there is a spiritual man. Behind a diabetic there is a yogi. Behind a man suffering from depression, there is an aspirant. When a patient comes for help, teach him yoga and make him better. Treat his sickness, but do not stop there. Take him further into the spiritual domain of life”.

This is the mistake that most yoga teachers make in the West, they take a patient with arthritis, rheumatism or insomnia, teach him a few exercises and that is it. Hatha yoga has not been used to treat the total personality. This is why teachers are not able to raise the level of their pupils. Just to improve the physical health is not enough. The mental health must also improve, the nature must change, the personality must change, the psychological and the psychic framework also has to change.

You should not merely feel freedom from disease, but freedom from bondage and from the vagaries of the mind. Now, it is imperative for yoga teachers in every part of the world to understand and transmit the true spirit of hatha yoga.

Questions for Discussion and Written Assignment:

1. In your own words, what is yoga?
2. What does your yoga practice mean to you?
THE THERAPEUTIC ASPECT

Hatha yoga is a method of preparing the system for spiritual awakening, but it is also a very important science of health. Since ancient times, it has been used by yogis and sages for the relief and elimination of all kinds of diseases and defects. It is true that the practices require more time and effort on the part of the patient than conventional therapies, but in terms of permanent, positive results, as well as saving the enormous expenditure on medicines, they are absolutely more worthwhile.

What makes this method of treatment so powerful and effective is the fact that it works according to the principles of harmony and unification, rather than diversity. The three important principles on which physical and mental therapy are based on are as follows:

1) Conferring absolute health to one part or system of the body thereby influencing the rest of the body.
2) Balancing the positive and negative energy poles (ida and pingala, prana and apana).
3) Purifying the body of the three types of wastes (doshas).

If you have fifteen grandfather clocks together on the same wall, all with pendulums of identical length and weight, you will notice that after some time, all the pendulums become synchronized in their movements. This occurs quite naturally according to the law of mutual rhythms and vibrations.

In this physical body, the various organs and systems all have their own functions to carry out, but there should be complete coordination between them. If any of the organs or systems of the body are not able to coordinate with each other, it means that not one but all the systems and organs are unbalanced. Thus, in any sickness, whether physical or mental, every system is out of coordination.

According to the law of mutual rhythms, all you have to do in order to regain the health of the whole system is to bring one organ or system to a state of health. Then all the others will naturally follow suit.

NOTES
There are a number of reliable texts on hatha yoga such as The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Goraksha Samhita, Gheranda Samhita and Hatharatnavali, which were written between the 6th and 15th centuries AD. There are also minor references to hatha yoga in the ancient Upanishads and Puranas, as well as in the very important text of Srimad Bhagavatam (the story of Krishna). The systematic form of hatha yoga began to emerge in India some time in the 6th century AD.

In ancient times, hatha yoga was practised for many years as a preparation for higher states of consciousness. The hatha yoga practices, which were designed by the rishis and sages of old for the evolution of mankind, are now being understood and utilised in a very limited sense as the real purpose of this great science has been forgotten altogether. Very often, people only claim to practise physical, hatha yoga, neglecting meditation and other aspects of yoga. However, this is an incorrect way of approaching hatha yoga.

Buddha formulated his teachings, which are known as the Four Noble Truths. Two of Buddha’s systems became widely known all over the world - vipassana and anapanasati (contemplation). Buddha laid a basic foundation called the Eightfold Path, which was a system of ethics similar to the yama and niyama of raja yoga.

As a result of Buddha’s popularity, meditation became the main form of spiritual practice. However, the preparatory practices were ignored. Ethics and morality were very much overemphasised. Although Indians believe that meditation is the highest path, but they disagree on one point - that one can start meditation immediately. Instead they believe one has to prepare oneself.

Five hundred years after Buddha, two great universities were established - Hinamaya (the ‘narrow path’) which is the orthodox Buddhist system and Vikram Shila (the ‘great path’) which is the unorthodox Buddhist system that included tantra into their teachings.

After about five hundred years or so, the popularity and influence of Buddhism declined and so did these tantric sects and their practices. At this time, Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, and a few other yogis in the tradition took the science and set out to purify the tantric system. So they separated the hatha yoga and the raja yoga practices of tantra from the rest.
and left out the rituals of tantra altogether, not even mentioning them. When they culled the practices, they picked up the useful, practical and noble practices of yoga from the tantric system.

Buddha’s teachings later remained merely what we can call psychological experiences. Therefore, it became necessary to reintroduce a proper system of meditation. That is how the system of hatha yoga was established. It was at this time that Matsyendranath founded the Nath cult which believed that, before taking to the practices of meditation, you must purify the body and its elements. This is the theme of hatha yoga.

**SCIENCE OF PURIFICATION**

Of the many authorities on hatha yoga, one outstanding personality is Swatmarama who compiled the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. It is a text which illumines a multitude of physical, mental and spiritual problems for aspirants.

Swatmarama completely eliminated the *yama*, moral codes, and *niyama*, self-restraints as they pose great problems faced by every aspirant, even though they are the starting points in the Buddhist and Jain systems, as well as in Sage Patanjali’s raja yoga.

In the *Yoga Sutras* Patanjali divided raja yoga into eight steps. Yama and niyama are the first two, followed by asana and pranayama. Then come pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

What are yama and niyama? Self-control, rules of conduct and observances: truth, non-violence, celibacy, non-stealing, non-aggrandizement, external and internal purity, and contentment, are some of the regulations. Yama and niyama have more to do with religion than with a person’s spiritual life.

Experience has taught us that in order to practise yama and niyama, discipline and self-control, a certain quality of mind is needed. However, harmony has to be created in the personality first, if not, self-control and self-discipline will create more conflict rather than peace of mind.

**EMPHASIS ON SHATKARMA**

In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Swatmarama begins by saying that you should first purify the whole body - the stomach, intestines, nervous system and other systems. Therefore, shatkarma comes first, i.e. neti, dhauti, basti, kapalabhati, trataka and nauli. Hatha yoga begins with these practices.

However, shatkarma alone does not constitute the whole of hatha yoga. After shatkarma, you should practise asana and pranayama.

The subtle elements, *tattwas*, the energy channels, *nadis*, within the body should be purified. The behaviour of the vital force, *prana*, the entire nervous system and the various secretions in the body should be properly maintained and harmonised.

After this, one should go on to practise mudras like vajroli, sahajoli, khechari, shambhavi, vipareeta karani and others. In this way, it will be possible to develop deep meditation. These practices will induce pratyahara and lead into dharana, dhyana and samadhi.
THE OBJECTIVE OF HATHA YOGA
Hatha yoga is also known as the science of purification. When you clear the body of impurities, the nadis function correctly and energy blocks are released. When the rishis discovered the science of hatha yoga, they did not have yoga therapy in mind. Although yoga has proved to be very effective in the treatment of many impossible and incurable diseases, the therapeutic effect of yoga is only a byproduct and incidental.

The main objective of hatha yoga is to create an absolute balance of the interacting activities and processes of the physical body, mind and energy. When this balance is created, the impulses generated give a call of awakening to the central force, *sushumna nadi*, which is responsible for the evolution of human consciousness. If hatha yoga is not used for this purpose, its true objective is lost.

THE INTERPLAY OF THE INNER ENERGY
It has been explained in hatha yoga that *ha* represents prana, the vital force, and *tha* represents mind, the mental energy. So hatha yoga means the union of the pranic and mental forces. When union between the pranic and mental forces takes place, it awakens the higher consciousness.

Prana *shakti*, the life force, and monas *shakti*, the mental force, are the two fundamental creators. All matter in this creation is alive and it is also conscious. In yoga, life and consciousness are known as prakriti and purusha; in tantra they are known as Shakti and Shiva. In hatha yoga, they are called ida and pingala; in taoism, yin and yang, and in physics, matter and energy.

HARMONY BETWEEN THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FORCES
The concept in hatha yoga is to bring about a harmony between these two great forces known as ida and pingala. In hatha yoga, first of all the purification of the whole bodily mechanism, the physical complex, takes place. You should always keep in mind that the body, the mind and the spirit are not three, they are one. At one level of existence, you see the body. At another level, you perceive it as the mind. You should never consider spirit as different from body and body as different from spirit. They are one.

TRANSCENDENCE THROUGH TRAINING
In hatha yoga, first of all, we take care of the body and purify it by six methods. The most important point is that the nadis have to be purified for the purpose of meditation. Our body functions along very simple lines. Just as a machine produces wastes, likewise our body continuously produces wastes. These wastes are of three types: mucus, gas, and acidity. If we cleanse the body internally from time to time, the excesses of these three metabolic products are removed, and their formation is regulated and balanced. The nervous system must also be trained, because it is the carrier of impulses through the sensory and motor channels. For an uninterrupted flow of energy to pass throughout the body, it is vital that all blockages are perfect health can be maintained.

In *the Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Swatmarama begins by saying that you should first purify the whole body - the stomach, intestines, nervous system and other systems. Therefore, shatkarma comes first, i.e. neti, dhauti, basti, kapalbhati, trataka and nauli. Hatha yoga begins with these practices.
removed, because if they are not, then in meditation, you will have all sorts of abnormal manifestations. Therefore, these six kriyas of hatha yoga (neti, dhauti, basti, nauli, kapalabhati and trataka) are necessary for spiritual aspirants.

**CONCENTRATION DEPENDS ON PURIFICATION**

These then are the basic hatha yoga kriyas which tend to purify the energy patterns and bring a balance between them. When these patterns are well under control, then you can force your mind onto one point.

Prana can never be motionless. The pranas are always moving, and the mind is ever-changing as well. These two highly mobile energies have to be brought into a steady state. Concentration is extremely difficult. Concentration is unbroken awareness of one point at all times, like one line stretching into the far distance. It does not break, it does not turn, it does not reverse, it is not intercepted. It is unbroken and steady. One idea, the same idea, no other idea, no other thought. That is concentration, and it should happen by itself.

**METAMORPHOSIS FROM GROSS TO SUBTLE**

The two forces of mind and prana maintain the rhythm of life and consciousness. Everything in the universe is evolving. Transformation is a scientific fact. It is not a philosophy, faith or creed. It is the path of evolution, and it gives meaning to life. This physical body constantly undergoes various processes of transformation, which affect each and every molecule of its material substance.

If this body can undergo a state of metamorphosis, then what is the way? The answer is yoga. Through the processes of yoga, the body is rendered so subtle and pure that it is transformed into a yogic body which is unaffected by old age and disease.

Hatha yoga is practised in order to initiate a process in this physical body whereby the pranic currents and mental forces which interact with each other in the scheme of life and existence may be transformed. Unless the physical molecules are transformed, it is no use discussing compassion or unity.

If matter in its ultimate form is energy, then this physical body can be transformed into solid energy through the systematic practice of the six cleansing techniques of hatha yoga. After this, asana and pranayama should be practised.

**UNION OF MIND AND BODY IS YOGA**

Hatha yoga means the union of prana and mind with the Self. In the spine, there are three major nadis known as: ida, pingala and sushumna. Nadi here does not mean nerve. It is not a physical channel. Nadi means flow. So, in hatha yoga, ida nadi represents the negative force, the flow of consciousness, pingala represents the positive force, the flow of vital energy, and sushumna nadi represents the neutral force, the flow of spiritual energy.

The union, the connection between these three flows, occurs in ajna chakra at the eyebrow centre. When this union takes place, there is an instant awakening in mooladhara chakra at the base of the spine. This is the seat of primal energy or kundalini shakti. The awakening of kundalini is the subject matter of hatha yoga. When awakening occurs, then kundalini ascends to higher realms of consciousness, and finally it is established in sahasrara chakra at the crown of the head.

When kundalini is established in sahasrara chakra, that is called yoga, not hatha yoga. Yoga means union of Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (energy). Shakti is kundalini energy; Shiva is the Supreme Consciousness seated in sahasrara chakra.
Kundalini ascends through sushumna - the highway for kundalini. It passes through various chakras. When it unites with ida and pingala in ajna chakra, that is called hatha yoga. Then, after this first union, it forges ahead to sahasrara chakra. There it unites with the Supreme Consciousness, Shiva. That is called yoga, which means ultimate union. Therefore, the ultimate object of hatha yoga is to experience yoga.

AROUSING POTENTIAL ENERGY

Awakening of the chakras must take place first before kundalini can be awakened. If the chakras are not functioning properly, if there is a blockage somewhere, then the energy cannot penetrate.

Supposing you have purified the nadis by asana and pranayama, and you have also awakened the chakras by pranayama and a few asanas, there then remains the awakening of sushumna, the central channel. Sushumna flows from mooladhara chakra, at the lowest circuit, to ajna, the highest circuit, and it is a very important nadi. The awakened kundalini shakti has to pass through sushumna. Therefore, before awakening kundalini, sushumna should be awakened.

CONTROLLING THE MIND BY CONTROLLING THE PRANA

The hatha yoga texts state very clearly that by controlling the pranas, the mind is automatically controlled. It seems that prana and mind exert an influence on each other. When the pranas are restless, it affects the mind and vice versa.

By practising pranayama correctly, the mind is automatically conquered. However, the effects of pranayama are not so simple to manage. It creates extra heat in the body, it awakens some of the dormant centres in the brain. It lowers the respiratory rate and changes the brain wave patterns. When these changes take place, you may not be able to handle it. Therefore, hatha yoga says that the shatkarmas must be practised first.

The purpose of emphasising shatkarma is to prepare a base for the higher practices of pranayama. Shatkarma purifies the whole system and removes blockages on the paths of ida and pingala. When there are no mental or vital blockages, the breath in both the nostrils flows systematically. When both the nostrils are flowing equally, that means sushumna is flowing, which makes meditation easier. Awakening of sushumna, making sushumna nadi flow, is the most important process in yoga which precedes kundalini awakening.

DIMENSIONS OF PRANA

Shatkarma is the preparation for pranayama. Most people think of pranayama as breathing exercises but it is far more. Ayama literally means ‘dimension’, not ‘control’. So pranayama is practised in order to expand the dimensions of prana within you.

When the pranic energy is aroused and awakened through the practice of pranayama, it is circulated to these dark areas of consciousness.

THE PRACTICAL ASPECT

If you want to achieve this transcendental experience, the practices of hatha yoga and pranayama should be perfected. The rules and recommendations should also be observed. So, once you have decided to step into another dimension of consciousness, you must be ready to sacrifice some of those things which are definitely detrimental to the practice of pranayama and hatha yoga. Therefore, remember that the

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practices of hatha yoga, asana and pranayama are ultimately intended for developing the quality of human consciousness, not just the mind or body.

Hatha yoga is most effective because you are working on the prana and bypassing the mind. It is also a great science which everyone can practise according to his or her own capacity. Maybe not all, but at least a few techniques can be practised each day. Hatha yoga techniques, along with asana and a few pranayama, are sufficient for most people. It is necessary to practise these preparatory limbs first. Then you may go further.

THE THERAPEUTIC EFFECT
Hatha yoga is a method of preparing the system for spiritual awakening, but it is also a very important science of health. Since ancient times, it has been used by yogis and rishis for the relief and elimination of all kinds of diseases and defects. What makes this method of treatment so powerful and effective is the fact that it works according to the principles of harmony and unification, rather than diversity.

In this physical body, the various organs and systems all have their own functions to carry out, but there should be complete coordination between them. If any of the organs or systems of the body are not able to coordinate with each other, it means that not one but all the systems and organs are unbalanced. Thus, in any sickness, whether physical or mental, every system is out of coordination.

Physical and mental therapy is one of the most important achievements of hatha yoga. So far, hatha yoga has succeeded in treating diseases like asthma, diabetes, and blood pressure where modern science has not. Besides this, hatha yoga has proved very effective in cases of epilepsy, hysteria, rheumatism and many other ailments of a chronic and constitutional nature. In fact, most diseases of a chronic and constitutional nature can definitely be reversed through hatha yoga.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF HATHA YOGA
In the last forty years, hatha yoga has been accepted as a therapeutic science all over the world and many scientific studies have been conducted in this field. Today, we teach yoga to people because it is very necessary. Man has become sick and medical science is not able to meet the challenge. Hatha yoga, however, has been helping everybody.

Hatha yoga helps to improve the mental health, physical health, nature, personality, psychological and psychic framework of a person. Hatha yoga does not only free a person of diseases, it also provides freedom from bondage and from the vagaries of the mind.
2.4 THE 5 KOSHAS

THE KOSHAS ARE LAYERS, OR SHEATHS, THAT MOVE FROM THE OUTERMOST LAYER OF SKIN TO THE DEEP SPIRITUAL CORE.

THE KOSHAS PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR CONCEPTUALIZING OURSELVES – YOU CAN USE KOSHAS AS POINTS OF REFERENCE FOR SELF AWARENESS AND EXPLORATION, ALWAYS STARTING FROM THE OUTER MOST THEN TRAVELLING INWARD.

The koshas, or sheaths, were first referenced in the Upanishads, which are part of the Vedic literature.

Think of koshas as a road map to take with you on your inner journey. Practicing yoga regularly invokes the right understanding and awareness and clears the mind of delusional thought processes. Many refer to this as ‘waking up’.

The koshas can be seen as simple reference points for your experiences and understanding on your journey inward to the true self. You can also use koshas as a tool for focusing your mind, for focusing your awareness on a particular part of you body or consciousness — for observation of the physical and subtle self. Koshas can also be understood as the five dimensions of our existence. Our existence is both a philosophical concept as well as tangible reality at the same time. So are koshas. Koshas are commonly referred to as ‘bodies’, i.e. mental body, spiritual body, etc.

Thinking of the Kosha bodies as ‘layers’, will help you to visualize them easier. Think of Russian dolls; on the outside there is the physical body, within that you see the energy body, within that you see the mental body, within that you see the wisdom body and within that you see the bliss body.

However, even though the Kosha are studied as if they are cut-and-dried separate things, they are still intertwined and inter-penetrate each other. They are constantly influencing each other. An example of this is your emotional state (which forms part of your Manomaya Kosha - mental body): If you are very stressed or unhappy it can make you physically tense, stiff and even create aches and pains (effecting your Annamaya Kosha - physical body).

You can try it in the reverse manner: If you eat well and practice yoga regularly, your health and flexibility improves. When that happens your mood improves, you are happier, which can make you more open
minded and accepting — you feel lighter. In this case your Annamaya Kosha (physical body) is effecting your Manomaya Kosha (mental body).

While we are going to look into koshas as if they are different from each other, it is important to understand that they are just different facets of our existence, which is ultimately one, single whole.

1: ANNAMAYA KOSHA - PHYSICAL BODY
Practise: Asana, Nutrition
This kosha is composed of all physical structure, which is made of the five elements. Ayurveda goes deeply into the Annamaya Kosha, analyzes it as composed of seven Dhatus (building blocks). It is strengthened primarily by physical exercises, proper diet, asana, breath, and rest.

2: PRANAMAYA KOSHA - ENERGY BODY
Practise: Breathing
The electrical and vibratory, living energy body. Stimulating, organizing, and retaining energy defines this kosha. Pranamaya Kosha is the life force; in the nerve impulses, breath, bio-electro-magnetic field. Pranayama, visualization, chakra work and others forms of concentration refine awareness this kosha. Controlling this energy creates a paradigm shift about the mind.

3: MANOMAYA KOSHA - MENTAL BODY
Practise: Awareness, Mindfulness, Be Here Now
This is the space of the mind. Thoughts, emotions and ego operate from here and the five sensory organs report to it. It is also where memory and intellect work takes place. Breathing practices makes it much easier to discipline the mind as Manomaya and Pranamaya are very closely linked. Choosing better decisions and behaviours that make life more simple and beautiful is best for realizing the space of Manomaya Kosha.

4: VIJNANAMAYA KOSHA - WISDOM BODY
Practise: Concentration, Mental Happiness
This is the wisdom aspect. It’s developed by awareness and intellect to realize that the other koshas are tools for acquiring self-knowledge. This kosha is like a still point in the mind which observes without judgement and operates from intuition and truth seeking. Its faculties lead to the deeper understanding of the self, perceiving the self.

5: ANANDAMAYA KOSHA - BLISS BODY
Practise: Meditation, Mantra
This is the wisdom aspect. It’s developed by awareness and intellect to realize that the other koshas are tools for acquiring self-knowledge. This kosha is like a still point in the mind which observes without judgement and operates from intuition and truth seeking. Its faculties lead to the deeper understanding of the self, perceiving the self.

SAMADHI - Becoming Truth
Becoming truth exceeds all superficial experiences and goes beyond rational understanding, being awakened beyond limitations or illusions of separateness, there is only infinite wholeness. Each of us has a different internal program to unlock our individual evolution to this divine state beyond the qualities of forms and all the keys we need are right inside of ourselves.

NOTES
2.5 | KOSHAS AS VISUAL INTERPRETATIONS

These diagrams are just a few representations of how the koshas can be visualised.

Top: This diagram pictorially represents the koshas as ‘auras’ that emanate from the body.

Middle: This diagram below visualises the journey through the koshas to the inner body, to the self, or truthfulness, or Samadhi.

Bottom: This diagram visualises the koshas much like the structure of an atom.

It is important to consider that koshas may not be necessarily physical, nor invisible energetic elements, but rather, philosophical reference points to experiences in process of practicing yoga.

Practice in hatha - from the external discipline of the physical body, to energetic, to mental, to spiritual self-realization, transcending illusion and duality. This equals union/one-ness, which equals yoga.

1: Annamaya Kosha - Physical Body
2: PranaMaya Kosha - Energy Body
3: Manomaya Kosha - Mental Body
4: Vijnanamaya Kosha - Wisdom Body
5: Anandamaya Kosha - Bliss Body
2.6 | YOGA PRACTICE - THE 8 LIMBS

A SYSTEM FOR YOGA PRACTICE – RAJA YOGA – ROYAL YOGA
A yoga practice is a systematic formula as detailed by Patanjali. This formula is believed to be most direct way to still the mind and achieve Samadhi. This system is known as the 8 Limbs of Yoga or the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali:

ABOUT THE 8 LIMBS
As detailed by Patanjali, this is the structure and the most direct way to still the mind and achieve liberation, truth and understanding (Samadhi). It is said, ‘The goal is very near for one who practices with intense dedication and supreme consistency. All beings will greatly increase their clarity and concentration by adhering to these practices.’

THE RESULTS OF PRACTICE
As the practitioner continues to move deeper into practice, self-knowledge arises. This self-knowledge leads to a natural release of the desire for sensory pleasures because inner joy fills its place.

While the senses may still create enjoyment, life becomes directed more from inner wisdom and intuition for improving practice. In those sensory pleasures that the practitioner still pursues, increased intellect from practice is used to work out his karmic relationships with those forms. The two aspects, positive, disciplined focus, and negative, renunciation of desires, balance each other. First the practitioner decides to give up some ‘pleasure’ or maybe just time to try a yoga class. After feeling the results from practice, the curiosity rises, and then follows the decision to dedicate themselves to the practice. Practice deepens and freedom from desires ensues, replaced by innate and profound contentment. The ultimate freedom and ultimate bliss come when the qualities of nature are renounced for the splendour of the soul.

Balancing Yoga and life – Dharma Yoga
There is another way of practicing Yoga which is summed up by the popular phrase ‘take your yoga off the mat’. This idea, which is explained provocatively in the Bhagavad Gita and expounded by many of the famous saints of India in recent times, directs one to live a dutiful life of fulfilling one’s unique purpose in the world.

For this to be a spiritual practice it must embody the ideals of service that uplifts fellow mankind, and be done without attachment to the results. This means to follow your intuition and do what you feel is right, and to focus on the doing, not claiming or deserving of any outcome.

This phenomenon can be most easily observed in those experiences when people are compelled to help others in need or when artists and performers channel a creative flow which feels to come from a higher intelligence, or experience enthusiasm beyond their normal ability.

Use it all – Raja Yoga plus Dharma Yoga
Between these two ways of practice and their positive and negative aspects, it becomes easy to follow the ‘middle way’ and study ourselves. It is not necessary to give up society to seek yoga. It is also not possible to make spiritual progress or feel ‘in the right place’ without making an effort to tune in with yourself while applying moral and social conduct.

Those that do give up external enjoyments do so because they have gone far enough into yoga that they find there is something more fulfilling and important for them. As always, true progress comes when you prepare yourself, and follow your genuine interests. That too, is your practice.
Many people think of yoga as a physical process of movement, just as many people think of the 8 limbs of yoga as 8 steps to follow one by one until Samadhi is realised – as in Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga. In fact, yoga is a practice of many components, all to be practiced simultaneously. The diagram to the left illustrates how all 8 limbs combine to encompass the practice of yoga. How many limbs of yoga do you practice?

1. YAMA
Yama cultivates us to not trespass upon others or ourselves. The truth is oneness. Oneness cannot trespass itself, so to realize oneness we must behave as such.
   a. Ahimsa – non violence
   b. Satya – truth abiding
   c. Asteya – non-stealing
   d. Brahmacharya – energy conservation
   e. Aparigraha – non hoarding

2. NIYAMA
Niyama cultivates the correct state for practice and realization, going from physical, to emotional, mental, to spiritual.
   a. Saucha – cleanliness
   b. Santosha – contentment
   c. Tapas – intense discipline
   d. Svadhyaya – self and scriptural study
   e. Isvaha Pranidhan – surrender to the divine

3. ASANA (STEADY POSTURE)
   Pranayama is a purification practice, allowing us to develop and experience physical and energetic balance. Asana is preparatory to pranayama.

4. PRANAYAMA (ENERGY CONTROL)
   Pranayama is a purification practice, allowing us to develop and experience physical and energetic balance. It is important that asana precedes pranayama.

5. PRATYAHARA
   Coming to spend time practicing asana and pranayama we have withdrawn ourselves from most sensory pleasures and the deeper withdrawal of the senses becomes possible, pratyahara.

6. DHARANA
   Now we are fit for dharana, intense focus. This may be on the breath, a yantra (sacred symbol), stillness, or a mantra (sacred vocalizations).

7. DHYANA
   The sustained focus on the object leads to a state of feeling that there is only the object and the self, dhyana.

8. SAMADHI
   This leads to merger between observer and observed, a realization of oneness, samadhi.

Questions for Discussion and Written Assignment:
For you, what is Yoga? Do you practice all the limbs of yoga, and if so which ones? What would your life be like if you followed the complete yogic practice?
3 | THE YOGIC LIFESTYLE

The most common preparatory exercises for modern yogis are diet, lifestyle habits, looking after your body and your mind.

Diet can have a profound effect on the outcome of your practice and the resulting personal and spiritual development.

Preparing your body and mind with appropriate breathing and warm up techniques will have a significant increase in the positive outcomes of your yoga practice.
EATING HABITS, FOOD AND DIET
The best time to practice is on an empty stomach. There are several reasons why practicing with as little food in the body as possible is advised:

The primary reason is that mass and pressure of food in the stomach and intestines will limit the movements of the lungs and diaphragm and decrease our ability to maintain supportive muscular contraction, or bandhas. This limits the potential for dynamic breathing and stability in demanding asana.

Secondly, food in digestion requires resources such as blood and nerve force which will diminish energy and focus needed for other areas in practice. There are even certain postures and techniques, such as Uddiyana Bandha Kriya, which would be stressful if done too soon after eating. Some practices can be done with food in the stomach but these should be mild and done with good control. To get the most from your practice time, do it on an empty stomach whenever possible. Hence, the many traditional recommendations for early morning practices.

Vegetarianism encompasses the practice of following plant-based diets (fruits, vegetables, etc.), with or without the inclusion of dairy products or eggs, and with the exclusion of meat as a way of following Ahimsa.

WHAT ARE SATTVIC FOODS?
Sattvic foods are pure, clean and wholesome. Sattva, originally a Sanskrit word, is defined as the quality of purity and goodness.

A sattvic diet consists of food that gives life, strength and energy to the individual. Yoga practitioners make use of the sattvic diet to support the practices of anushasanam, which means the governing of one’s subtle nature and the quieting of the mind, this is not just for the health of the body.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the sattvic foods as promoting life, virtue, strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. It also says that sattvic foods are savoury, smooth, firm and pleasant to the stomach.

ORGANIC FOOD AND COOKING WITH METTA – LOVING KINDNESS
Organic foods are therefore recommended for both their purity and vitality. Food should be fresh and freshly prepared. Sattvic foods are light in nature, easy to digest, mildly cooling (this is an interesting point since in colder climates a purely sattvic diet may not be recommended... more on this to follow), refreshing and not disturbing to the mind.

It is also said that the way sattvic food is prepared is also important, which means the persons state of mind when making the food should be positive and the food is best prepared with a state of love and awareness. This is important because many believe the emotions or energy of the person preparing the food is passed on to the food. I am sure you remember a time when someone in a bad mood made you dinner and it just was not as good as normal (maybe they did everything right but their emotions coloured the food... something to think about).
Growing your own herbs and having a garden is also helpful since you can put a lot of your own love into these plants.

**SATTVIC EATING**

Pure, sattvic foods need to be chewed carefully and eaten in modest portions. This is also a key nutritional point if we look at today’s science. If you chew your food properly then it is easier to digest, but also takes more time to eat. By taking this time, the stomach can accurately tell you the moment it has had enough and when to stop. You may think you know when you are full but you do not. Give this a try; for each time you put food in your mouth chew it 20 times before the next, you will find you get full with less food. Another example is eating quickly. Have you ever eaten fast until you are full, and then 20 minutes later felt unwell, and the rest of the day felt drained of energy and heavy (because food was going in so quickly by the time the stomach sent the message there was already extra food)? The reason for this is the stomach does not register ‘full’ by the amount (well not completely, if stuffed you will know it) but it registers by the calories and nutrition it is digesting.

Know the difference between feeling satisfied and full.

**HERE IS A LIST OF SOME SATTVIC FOODS TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR OWN YOGIC DIET:**

**Fresh organic fruits**

Almost all fruits, including apples, apricots, bananas, berries, dates, grapes, melons, lemons, mangoes, oranges, peaches and plums, are considered exceptional Sattvic foods. Sometimes yogis will go on fruit fasts, where they avoid all foods except fruit and fruit juices. They sometimes do this when participating in special *sadhana* (a *sadhana* is simply a daily spiritual practice designed to allow oneself to turn inward and perceive life as it truly is). Fruit is also considered symbolic of generosity and spirituality and is often given as gift to Gurus and teachers within Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

**Fresh organic dairy**

Dairy is considered controversial by many vegetarians, but the yoga tradition considers all types of dairy as sattvic foods and insists on the value of a wholesome food freely given through a symbol of motherhood, the cow. We do however, need to use the highest quality organic fresh dairy to benefit from its sattvic qualities however. Milk, butter, clarified butter (ghee), fresh home-made cheese, whey and fresh yogurt (especially lassi) are all very much recommended. They benefit from careful preparation, and the extra effort to learn the recipes is well worthwhile (as an extra here the simple act of cooking can be a great stress reliever, it is shown that the conscious mind can only focus clearly on one thing at a time, when you really get into cooking your stress seems to vanish). For example, milk can be diluted and warmed with mild spices (i.e. fresh ginger, cinnamon and cardamom) and served with raw honey to overcome any mucus-forming tendencies (it is very nice, try it before bed). Traditionally, if a yogi is doing advanced practices, the dairy provides needed lubrication, grounding and protein that the body will need. In fact, dairy along with fruit have been described as the epitome of the sattvic or yogic diet.

**Questions to consider:**

What is important to you when considering your food choices? What is your attitude if you can’t get what you want? How do you feel when preparing your own food?
Nuts, seeds and oils
Fresh nuts and seeds are good additions to the sattvic diet in small portions, as long as they are not salted or overly cooked. Good choices are almonds (especially when peeled and soaked in water overnight), coconut (fresh coconut water is the most wonderful drink, cut open a coconut drop a straw in and enjoy!), pine nuts, walnuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds and flax seeds are all good as well (making sure there is no added salt). Oils should be of highest quality and cold-pressed. Good choices are olive oil, sesame oil and flax oil, extra virgin oil are good choices.

Organic vegetables
A lot of mild organic vegetables are considered sattvic foods, including beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, green leafy veggies, sweet potatoes and squash. The green leafy ones really are the best to focus on though.

Whole grains
Whole grains provide excellent nourishment when well cooked. Consider organic rice, whole wheat, spelt, oatmeal and barley. You can also lightly roast the grains before cooking to remove some of their heavy quality. Yeasted breads are not recommended unless they are toasted. Favorite preparations are Kicharee (basmati rice cooked with split mung beans, ghee and mild spices), Kheer (rice cooked with milk and sweetened, as an alternative you can use sticky rice and coconut milk to make a great Thai dessert), Chapathis (non-leavened whole wheat flat bread). During some advanced training or practices Yogis will sometimes fast from grains.

Legumes
Split mung beans, yellow split peas, organic tofu, bean sprouts and perhaps lentils and aduki beans are considered sattvic foods, if well prepared. In general, the smaller the bean, the easier it is to digest. Strategies include splitting, peeling, grinding, soaking, sprouting, cooking and spicing. One note is that legumes combined with whole grains offer a complete protein combination (as far as vegetable protein goes).

A word about meat
Meats are not sattvic foods. They are tamasic, or dulling. However, human beings need to have some meat within our diet. Remember that vegetable protein is missing several amino acids. For me I still eat meat myself but it only accounts for 10% of my diet, and that includes fish. I have added this due to my training and education in the field of nutrition.

When we think of Buddhist and Hindu traditions they also agree with this but traditionally they will only eat the meat of non-mammals, they get protein from fish, seafood and poultry. However they do abstain from meat completely 3 days a week, and 2 times a year, where they do so for a week or two for cleansing.

Sweeteners
Yogis use raw honey (especially in combination with dairy) and raw sugar (not refined).

Spices
Sattvic spices are the mild spices, they include basil, cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, fennel, fenugreek, fresh ginger and turmeric... Hot and strong spices are not sattvic, but rajasic (agitating).

Fasting and cleansing
Fasting is primarily the act of willingly abstaining from some, or all food, drink, or both for a period of time. An absolute fast is normally defined as abstinence from all food and liquid for a defined period, usually a single day (24 hours), or several days. Juice fasting involves abstaining from food while deriving nutritional intake through freshly-juiced vegetables and fruits so that the body may detoxify. Other fasts may be only partially restrictive, limiting particular foods or substance.

SUGGESTED MEDIA TO WATCH:
Search for “Eat, Fast and Live Longer” on Vimeo.
### 3.2 TABLE OF ENERGISING AND HEALING CHEMICALS AND MINERALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mineral/Chemical</th>
<th>Available From</th>
<th>Good For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CALCIUM</strong></td>
<td>Greens: Kale, Turnup Greens, Beet Tops, Cabbage, Romaine Lettuce, Alfalfa Sprouts, Agar Almonds, Avocados, Coconut, Kelp, Dulse, Raw Hard Cheeses, Goat’s Milk, Sesame Seeds, Gelatin</td>
<td>Bones, Teeth, Nails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IODINE</strong></td>
<td>Dulse, Kelp, Agar, Blueberries, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Fish, Fish Roe, Garlic, kale, Leaf Lettuce</td>
<td>Thyroid, Metabolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SODIUM</strong></td>
<td>Celery, Goats Whey, Kelp, Dulse, Lentils, Turnips, Strawberries, Kale, Sesame Seeds, Parsley</td>
<td>Joints, Stomach, Lymph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAGNESIUM</strong></td>
<td>Turnip Greens, Black Walnuts, Goats Milk, Tofu, Apricots, Apples, Green Pepper, Oats, Prunes, Figs, Dulse, Lentils</td>
<td>Bowels, Muscles, Nerves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>POTASSIUM</strong></td>
<td>Almonds, Beets, Turnips, Apricots, Bananas, Carrots, Potato Peelings, Pears, Grapes, Parsnips, Parsley</td>
<td>Muscles, Heart, Kidneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRON</strong></td>
<td>Black Cherries, Dried Fruits, Blackstrap Molasses, Dulse, Greens, Kelp, Brown Rice Polishings, Almonds, Prunes, Dates, Figs, Rasins</td>
<td>Blood, Brain, Lungs, Nerves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OXYGEN</strong></td>
<td>Beets, Blueberries, Carrots, Figs, Fish, Goats Milk, Grapes, Green Peppers, Leeks Nuts, Seeds, Onions, Parsnips</td>
<td>Medulla, Brain, Lungs, Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MANGANSE</strong></td>
<td>Almonds, Apples, Apricots, Green Beans, Blackberries, Butternuts, Celery, Walnuts, Oats, Olives, Parsley, Celery</td>
<td>Brain, Nerves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLOURINE</strong></td>
<td>Quince, Avocados, Raw Goats Milk, Raw Cheese, Black-eyed Peas, Cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, Endive</td>
<td>Teeth, Bones, Hair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHOSPHORUS</strong></td>
<td>Egg Yolk, Fish, Fish Roe, Raw Goats Milk &amp; Cheese Almonds, Rice Bran, Wheat Bran and Germ, Pumpkin and Squash Seeds, Lentil, Soybeans, Sunflower Seeds</td>
<td>Brain, Nerves, Bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SULPHUR</strong></td>
<td>Asparagus, Broccoli, Oats, Corn, Cauliflower, Tomato, Kale, Leeks, Onions, Lima Beans, Figs</td>
<td>Brain, Nervous System, Blood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHLORINE</strong></td>
<td>Asparagus, Fish, Raw Goats Milk, Watercress, Avocados, Water Melon, Cucumber, Turnips, Leeks, Lentils</td>
<td>Nourishes nerves, Tissue construction, Blood Cleansing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CARBON</strong></td>
<td>Almonds, Avocados, Raw Butter, Raw Cheese, Raw Egg Yolks, Olive Oil, Turkey, Walnuts</td>
<td>Cell Organization, Purifies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NITROGEN</strong></td>
<td>Almonds, Black-eyed Peas, Bluefish, Buttermilk, Caviar, Salmon, Walnuts, Gelatin, Kidney Beans, Soy Beans</td>
<td>Skin, Muscles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Dr. Jensen’s Chemical Story, 2003
3.3 PRACTICE ADVICE

CONSIDER THE TIME OF DAY, THE DURATION, YOUR CHOICE OF CLOTHES, YOUR ENVIRONMENT AND FREQUENCY. THE MORE CONSIDERATION YOU PUT INTO THESE THE MORE YOU WILL ACHIEVE FROM YOUR HATHA YOGA PRACTICE.

BEST TIMES TO PRACTICE
The optimum times to practice hatha yoga are near sunrise and sunset. These are times of natural transition, these times make it easier to redirect your energy into better behaviours and beliefs. These times of day are also symbolic and meaningful, appropriate for cultivating further growth in consciousness. You can either be disciplined about your practice time and follow a schedule or be opportunistic and practice whenever the mood strikes.

DURATION
Hatha yoga classes typically span about 1-2 hours, however a self-practice may be shorter. People may think they don’t have enough time to practice, but even 20-30 minutes can be sufficient if done correctly. And 20-30 minutes is better than no practice at all. Sometimes just planning to do a little turns out to be a substantial practice in the end. Longer practices can last as long as the energy and focus of the practitioner is enthusiastic.

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING
Whatever you wear, your clothes should be of light breathable material and non-restrictive to your movement. Cotton based clothes with a basic style, and comfortable loose fit are recommended. Consider wearing only white or a simple color pattern. Colour has an effect on your feelings (emotions), therefore the colour of your clothing can affect the feeling in your attitude and practice. Choose your garments wisely. Garments should be modest but also minimal. A teacher will have difficulty observing your skeletal, muscular movements and your breathing technique if you are totally covered up or wearing clothing that camouflages your appearance. If you are practicing at home in front of the mirror, minimal clothing is very good as long as you don’t superficially distract yourself. You will be more mindful of breath movements while watching the abdomen and ribcage and you will learn to be comfortable with your body. The more comfortable you are with your body, the more emotionally free you will be, which in turn, will improve your mental clarity and focus.

When you’re wearing clothes it is actually best to avoid synthetic materials if possible. Some of these obstruct the healthy flow of atmospheric charges around your body. Yoga practice is about simplifying and freeing yourself so it doesn’t really make sense to clothe yourself in garment that may be restrictive or disruptive of energetic forces around you (for example, prana). It is also best to remove any accessories such as glasses, contact lenses, rings, and bracelets, etc. Long hair should be neatly put up and not pose a distraction or create discomfort.
PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT
Your environment is a very important part of practice. A beautiful, open place with fresh air will be an inviting and invigorating to practice in. The more open and spacious, the more prana you will interact with. You will enjoy your practice more and feel more energised and calm afterwards.

There are some theories that link polarity charge in the atmosphere to prana, the vital life energy. Research has already proven that the exchange of gases in the lungs is more efficient where the air is charged with negative ions. Negatively charged air also assist the movements of prana within the body. Positive charge is harmful. In cities, and other heavily industrialized areas, pollutants reduce or deplete negative atmospheric charge, decreasing this life empowering gift from the air.

Most naturally occurring negative charges are produced by evaporating water so the highest levels are found at the ocean and waterfalls! Be glad to be surrounded by the ocean to charge yourself up.

FREQUENCY
Developmental success in yoga comes part from consistent effort and part from intensity. You should practice hatha yoga in some way every day, and include an intense practice on a regular basis to compliment your daily routine. If you cannot maintain a daily practice, your focus should be to at least maintain your current level until you have the time again to reinstate the intensity that continues your evolution.

The best place is here.
The best Time is now.
Be here, now!
Life = Practice = Mindfulness
3.4 PREPARATORY CLEANSING - KRIYAS

AS PREPARATION FOR HATHA YOGA PRACTICE, KRIYAS, ARE PERFORMED DAILY.

Your body and your mind are the tools you use for perceiving how everything in our reality and beyond is connected. By ‘cleaning’ these tools your sensitivity becomes heightened and thus you will have more realistic observations.

These practices may be challenging at first but become more pleasant with experience and in the process you develop a deeper awareness and self-love as you learn to take better care of your mental and physical body.

There are many variations of kriyas but we will cover only those that are safe and practical to use. It should also be noted that these kriyas are, on the surface, physical cleansings. However these kriyas assist the automatic ‘internal’ cleansing mechanisms, in turn helping us to understand the emotional and mental ways of cleansing the inner bodies. In some ways these relationships are obvious. In other ways, they are not so easily put into words. Let’s just say many of us can understand much more about ourselves by incorporating kriyas into our yoga practice. Your own experiential understanding will take you the farthest.

JALA NETI (NETI POT)
Nasal Cleansing
Jala Neti (Neti Pot) is a practice which cleans the sinuses superficially and stimulates the body to purge other toxins from the nearby lymph systems.

Jala Neti is done with a water pot which is poured through one nostril and out the other by tilting the head to the side and slightly up, breathing done slowly through the mouth. The Neti Pot is great to do before pranayama practice.

The water should be a lukewarm saline solution. Do not use unfiltered tap water or water that you think may be polluted.

When finished, remove the residual water by doing kapalabhati and turning the head from side to side on the exhale. Triangle pose also helps to drain the nasal passageways.

Doing Jala Neti a few times a week is usually enough, however it is perfectly fine to do everyday. It can even be especially beneficial if you live in heavily polluted environment or a dry winter climate.

Sutra Neti is an extension of Jala Neti, performed with a clean waxed string which is inserted through the nose and out through the mouth. Gently pull the string back and forth for 10-20 seconds for each nostril.

KAPALABHATI
Impulse Breathing – Skull Shining
Typically best practiced in the seated asana such as Vajrasana Sukhasana, or Lotus. Kapalabhati can also be practiced in some asana and also the position for Uddiyana Bandha Kriya (standing with the feet apart, knees bent and hands on knees).

Kapalabhati is a cleansing technique for the lungs and digestive system. The name translates as ‘head polishing’ as the practice energizes the brain’s frontal lobe and psychic energy centers. It stimulates digestive fire and abdominal strength, assists movement through the GI tract, and flushes the blood stream with oxygen. It especially clears the mind and helps with mental focus.
The breath is pumped out in rapid, short blasts through the nose followed by passive inhaled, creating the release of the abdomen and diaphragm, a conscious inhale is not necessary. Work the action in the lower abdomen with as little movement elsewhere as possible. Let your face be calm and comfortable. Kapalabhati is not to be done after meals or when there is stomach pain.

NAULI
Abdominal Massage

Stage One: Madhyama Nauli (central abdominal contraction) Stand with the feet about a metre apart. Take a deep breath in through the nose and then exhale through the mouth, emptying the lungs as much as possible. Bend the knees slightly and lean forward, placing the palms of the hands on the thighs just above the knees. The fingers may point either inward or outward. The weight of the upper body should rest comfortably on this area above the knees. The arms should remain straight.

Perform jalandhara bandha while maintaining bahir kumbhaka, external breath retention. Keep the eyes open and watch the abdomen. Suck in the lower abdomen.

Contract the rectus abdominis muscles, so that they form a central arch, running vertically in front of the abdomen. Contract the muscles as much as possible, without straining. Hold the contraction for as long as it is comfortable to hold the breath.

Release the contraction, raise the head and return to the upright position. Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand.

Relax the whole body in the standing position until the heartbeat returns to normal. Repeat the practice.

Stage Two: Vama nauli (left isolation) Follow the instructions for madhyama nauli (Stage 1) as described above to the point where the lower abdomen is contracted and the rectus abdominis muscles form a central, vertical arch down the abdomen. Contract the muscles to the left side as strongly as possible, without straining. Then continue madhyama nauli.

Release the abdominal contraction, raise the head and return to the upright position. Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand. Relax while standing until the heartbeat returns to normal.

Stage Three: Dakshina nauli (right isolation) This is vama nauli, but repeated on the right side. After completing one round, relax in the upright position until the heartbeat returns to normal.

Stage Four: Abdominal rotation or churning This practice should not be attempted until the previous three stages have been mastered. Practise vama nauli on the left side, then rotate the muscles to the right, practicing dakshina nauli, and back to the left, vama nauli. Continue rotating the muscles from side to side. This process is known as churning.

Start by practising 3 consecutive rotations, then release the abdominal contraction.

Next start with dakshina nauli first, this time rotating the muscles from right to left, then left to right, 3 times consecutively.

Finally, perform madhyama nauli, isolating the muscles at the centre.

Raise the head and return to the upright position.

Inhale slowly and deeply, allowing the abdomen to expand. Relax in the upright position until the heartbeat returns to normal.

Time of practice: Nauli should be practised only when the stomach is completely empty, at least 5 to 6 hours after meals. The best time to practise is early in the morning before any food or drink is taken.
**Duration:** Start with 5 rounds of madhyama nauli and work up to 10. Vama and dakshina nauli should be performed together – 5 to 10 rounds each.

Start abdominal churning with 5 to 10 rotations and slowly increase to 25 rotations over a period of months as more control is gained over the muscles. Do not strain.

**Precautions:** Nauli should only be practiced under the guidance of a competent teacher. If any pain is felt in the abdomen during nauli, stop the practice immediately. Try again the following day with more awareness and less force.

**Contra-indications:** Nauli should not be attempted by people suffering from heart disease, hypertension, hernia, high blood pressure, abdominal pain, gallstones, acute peptic ulcer, constipation, or those who are recovering from surgery, especially abdominal surgery. Pregnant women should not practice nauli. However, six months after normal childbirth, the practice can help strengthen the abdominal and pelvic muscles.

**Benefits:** Nauli massages and tones the entire abdominal area, including the muscles, nerves, intestines, reproductive, urinary and excretory organs. It generates heat in the body and stimulates appetite, digestion, assimilation, absorption, and excretion. It helps to balance the adrenal component of the endocrine system. Nauli stimulates and purifies manipura chakra, the store house of prana. It helps to increase mental clarity and power by harmonizing the energy flows in the body.

**Practice note:** Madhyama nauli should be perfected before proceeding to vama or dakshina nauli.

Before attempting nauli, the practices of agnisara kriya and uddiyana bandha should be mastered. When nauli has been perfected in the standing position, it may be practiced in a seated position (e.g., Lotus).

**TRATAKA**

**Candle Gazing**

This is a practice for cleansing the eyes. Done at night time, ideally just before bed. A lit candle is placed at eye height, approximately one arm’s length away. Stare unwaveringly into the center of the candle flame, there may be an open dark space if the flame is steady. Stare there. Keep staring until the eyes begin to water and longer if possible. This practice also strengthens the eyes and is a powerful meditation and effective aid for sleeping more easily by quieting down the mind.

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**NAULI KRIYA**

**Starting (upright position)**

**Stage 1**

**Stage 2**

**Stage 3**

**Stage 4**

**Resting (upright position)**
3.5 | THE 7 CHAKRAS

**SAHASRARA**
(CROWN CHAKRA)

- petals: 1000
- breaths: 1000
- color: Purple
- stone: Amethyst
- gland: pineal
- organs: Cerebral Cortex, Upper Skull, thin - musical tone: Nishada
- healing raga: Chakradhwajam
- plane of existence: Satya

**AJNA**
(THIRD EYE CHAKRA)

- petals: 2
- breaths: 1000
- color: Indigo
- element: Mind
- stone: Blue Sodalite, Amethyst
- gland: Pituitary
- organs: Eye, Lower Skull - musical tone: Bhuvanata
- healing raga: Lalita
- zodiac sign: Aries
- sensory organ: All
- motor organ: All
- plane of existence: Tapa

**VISHUDDHA**
(THROAT CHAKRA)

- age: 32-40
- petals: 10
- breaths: 1000
- color: Blue
- element: Speech
- stone: Blue Agate, Lapis Lazuli
- gland: Throat/Parathyroid - organs: Throat, Heart, Throat, Throat
- plane of existence: Panchama
- healing raga: Laliya
- zodiac sign: Taurus, Gemini
- sensory organ: Sound
- motor organ: Speech
- plane of existence: Jana

**ANAHATA**
(HEART CHAKRA)

- age: 14-25
- petals: 12
- breaths: 6000
- color: Green
- element: Air
- stone: Rose Quartz, Green Amethyst
- gland: Thymus
- organs: Heart, Lungs
- plane of existence: Medhámya
- healing raga: Hindimúndra
- zodiac sign: Cancer
- sensory organ: Touch
- motor organ: Hands
- plane of existence: Maha

**MANIPURAKA**
(SOLAR PLEXUS CHAKRA)

- age: 16-44
- petals: 10
- breaths: 6000
- color: Yellow
- element: Fire
- stone: Yellow Jasper, Tiger’s Eye
- gland: Pancreas
- organs: Digestive System
- plane of existence: Gandhára
- healing raga: Wesháman
- zodiac sign: Leo
- sensory organ: Sight
- motor organ: Excretion
- plane of existence: Swa

**SWADHISTHANA**
(SACRAL CHAKRA)

- age: 0-5
- petals: 6
- breaths: 6000
- color: Orange
- element: Water
- stone: Orange Carnelian, Fiery Opal
- gland: Ovaries/Testes
- organs: Prostate, Sex Organs, Womb
- plane of existence: Násadhiya
- healing raga: Shambhovamsa
- zodiac sign: Libra, Virgo
- sensory organ: Taste
- motor organ: Reproduction
- plane of existence: Bhava

**MULADHARA**
(ROOT CHAKRA)

- age: Birth - 5 yrs
- petals: 4
- breaths: 6000
- color: Red
- element: Earth
- stone: Red Jasper, Garnet, Ruby
- gland: Adrenals
- organs: Bones, Skeletal Structure
- plane of existence: Shadja
- healing raga: Charókshëh
- sensory organ: Smell
- motor organ: Feet
- plane of existence: Bhru

The seven CHAKRAS in the body, their location, sound vibrations, glands and organs influenced by them as well as different foods to balance them.
3.6 | THE ESSENCE OF YOGA PHILOSOPHY

The essence of Yoga Philosophy

Purusha is Pure Consciousness. Prakriti is insentient. In the ‘Unmanifest’ state, the three subtle forces constituting Prakriti - Satva, Rajas and Tamas - are in perfect equilibrium. Due to interaction between Purusha and Prakriti, the latter evolves into the manifest creation in different stages as depicted here. Embodied beings are a mixture of Purusha and Prakriti, the mind-body system being Prakriti and the life-energy within being Purusha. Purusha journeys thru different life-forms, punctuated by birth and death, savoring what manifest Prakriti has to offer. When the Being experiences its natural state of Pure Consciousness thru Samadhi, it is freed from the eternal cycle of life and death and rests in a state of perfect Bliss.
4 | PRINCIPLES OF ASANA

YOGA ASANA AND VINYASA REQUIRES ECONOMY OF MOVEMENT. THIS MEANS LEARNING HOW TO USE THE PERFECT AMOUNT OF EFFORT TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR TASKS AND WITH EASE AND GRACE, WITHOUT OVER-EXERTION OR RISK OF INJURY.
Healthy movement can release stuck energy or poor muscle behaviour, and let inner joy come through the body. When breath is coordinated with physical movements, we also nurture the development of prana (energy) and all three movements become synchronous.

**HOW MUSCLES MOVE THE BODY**
Muscle cell contraction pulls small filaments together that en-masse pull the body in various ways, which moves the skeleton and attached structures. Muscles work in antagonist groups where a contracting muscle will always have an opposing stretching muscle. Muscle contraction is stimulated in two ways:

**Summation**
At any given time during muscle contraction only a percentage of cells within the muscle contract. Even with extreme effort it typically maxes at about 35%, which is a neurological limitation to prevent avulsion damage to the tendon. Initially, smaller cells engage first, as they are excited by less stimulation than the larger cells. As more muscular force is called upon, the electrical nerve force increases, enlisting more and larger cells which can have up to 50 times the contractile strength of the smallest ones.

**Frequency**
Muscle force is also increased by the rate at which cells receive signals from the central nervous system. The higher the rate, the more intense the contraction. The slower or weaker the contraction, into relaxation, having few or no signals.

**UTILIZING STRENGTH AND STAYING EASY**
In yoga asana it is a goal to be effortless even as muscles are at work. By practicing slowly, a more intelligent pattern and frequency of muscular contraction is learned for each asana which creates a feeling of steadiness. This is one aspect of the body intelligence which increases mental discrimination.

**MUSCULAR STRUCTURE**
THREE TYPES OF CONTRACTION

There are, in practicality, three ways we can experience muscle contraction.

Isometric
This is when force matches load and there is no movement, muscle length remains the same.

Concentric
This is the way people typically consider muscle work. Contraction generates movement and the muscle shortens, working against gravity or weight.

Eccentric
This is the controlled release of contractile force when the body is letting down an external load or its own weight into gravity. In yoga asana it happens when we do standing back bends, lower our arms, or do forward folds, etc.

STRETCHING

Stretching is the lengthening of muscles opposing to those that contract and shorten. Skill in controlling nerve impulse signals will allow it to stretch even farther. The stretch happens primarily in the belly of the muscles, nerves, and enveloping connective tissue, known as fascia. Healthy and frequent stretching in yoga asana increases range of motion and strengthens muscles if a degree of resistance to the stretch from the opposing group is engaged.

MUSCLE CO-ACTIVATION

Co-activation of opposing muscle groups is happening all the time and it is believed that it improves fine motor control. It also stabilizes joints. This is especially important in yoga asana to provide increased balance and also to protect the joints from injury. Everyone will have a unique degree of muscle recruitment between opposing muscles to create the proper balance of co-activation for the best joint stabilization.

Visual Consideration: Imagine the skeletal muscles as an adaptable suit. Visualize and be aware of the connection to every muscle cell in your body through the signals passing through your nervous system.
4.2 | WARM UP POSTURES

BELOW ARE SOME WARM UP POSTURES THAT PREPARE THE BODY WITHOUT BEING OVERLY STRENUEOUS. FUNDAMENTALLY THEY HELP TO WARM THE MUSCLES AND LOOSEN THE JOINTS.

**In Table Pose**
1. Inhale, Cow. Exhale, Cat. 3+ times.
2. Draw right knee in slightly, Inhale, raise right arm and left leg. Exhale, draw knee to nose and elbow to hip. 5+ times. Repeat other side.
3. Inhale, raise right arm and left leg. Exhale, over elbow and knee to the sides at hip and shoulder height. Inhale, draw the limbs back in a straight line with torso. Exhale, place the hand and knee down. Alternate sides. Repeat 5+ times.

**In Vajrasana – Toes Tucked**
Vikasa Shoulder and Wrist Warm Up
1. Inhale, hands in front of shoulders. Exhale, extend the arms straight out to the sides at shoulder height. Keep the fingers firm and extended. Begin shoulder rotations. 40 – 100,000 times.
2. Inhale raise the arms. Exhale lower the arms, 3 times.
3. Extend the arms again. Do wrist rotations 10x forwards and backwards and finger shoots. 40 times.

**In Forward Bend**
1. Inhale, Flat Back. Exhale, Forward Bend 5+times.
2. Inhale, step back to Low Lunge. Exhale, step forward, knees bent, pre-chair pose. Repeat other side.

**In Low Lunge**
1. Right leg forward. Inhale and extend spine. Exhale, Raise right arm and twist. Inhale, hand down and extend in low lunge. Exhale, drop left heel down, raise the left arm and open to pre-side angle pose.

**In Mountain Pose**
1. Inhale raise the arms. Exhale lower the arms 2. Inhale to Chair Pose. Exhale to Mountain Pose.

**In Child Pose**
1. Inhale in Child Pose. Exhale towards Chaturanga, upper body on knees. Inhale back to Child. You can build onto these basics to make longer sequences.
4.3  SUN SALUTATION (SUYRA NAMASKAR)

1. Exhale - awareness of Anahata
AUM Hram Mitraya Namaham
Salutations to the friend of all

2. Inhale - awareness of Vishuddha
AUM Hrim Ravaye Namaham
Salutations to the shining one

3. Exhale - awareness of Manipura
AUM Groom Suryaya Namaham
Salutations to he who induces activity

4. Inhale - awareness of Swadhisthana
AUM Hraim Bhanave Namaham
Salutations to he who illumines

5. Exhale - awareness of Ajna
AUM Hraum Khagaya Namaham
Salutations to the one who moves through the sky

6. Hold breath - awareness of Muladhara
AUM Hraha Pushne Namaham
Salutations to the giver of strength and nourishment

7. Inhale - awareness of Muladhara
AUM Hram Hiranya Garbhaya Namaham
Salutations to the golden cosmic self

8. Exhale - awareness of Ajna
AUM Hrim Marichaye Namaham
Salutations to the rays of sun

9. Inhale - awareness of Swadhisthana
AUM Groom Adityaya Namaham
Salutations to the son of infinite galactic mother

10. Exhale - awareness of Manipura
AUM Hraim Savitre Namaham
Salutations to the stimulating power of the sun

11. Inhale - awareness of Vishuddha
AUM Hraim Arkaya Namaham
Salutations to he who is fit to be praised

12. Exhale - awareness of Anahata
AUM Hraha Bhaskaraya Namaham
Salutations to the one who leads us to enlightenment
WHAT IS ASANA?
Asana is a position which is supremely steady and comfortable. Traditionally, asana was the meditative seated postures of yoga.

Asana can be defined as a physical yoga posture or position that is designed to help master the body and enhance the body’s functions.

Yoga poses are, in essence, ‘yoga exercises’, creating strength and endurance, improving circulation and energy flow, cleansing organs and other systems, and expanding muscles and joints. With all these benefits of the yoga poses, we should not lose attention to the original purpose of the yoga pose or yoga exercise.

Yoga exercises evolved thousands of years ago from the need to create a healthy body in order to move more readily to the state of oneness and realization. When a body is cluttered with stress, tension, and disease, the mind becomes cloudy and the ability to connect with the inner self is inhibited. The physical freedom attained from the yoga exercises increases one’s ability to sit with silence with enhanced perception and awareness. Asana can stimulate the physical and mental body which can contribute to healing many postural and mental imbalances.

ALIGNMENT AND BALANCE
The key to steadiness in asana is to know and perform correct alignment which allows for a release of extraneous effort and a feeling of lightness. A key principal of correct alignment is balance. Balance in a pose initially might be thought of as whether you can stay in it or not. Is there more weight on this side, or that? Is there more pressure in this hand or that hand? Inevitably, matters of alignment are discovered through inquiries about balance.

MUSCLE CO-ACTIVATION IN ASANA
Muscular pairs in co-activation promote healthy alignment and the even expansion of awareness through the body to discover finer balance. The result is space being made. The spine lengthens, or the body becomes taller or broader, and sense of balance becomes more refined. To do this, create equal effort in at least two actions or directions within an asana. In the humbling Mountain Pose press equally down through your feet and upwards through your head. Can those actions be more equal? In more challenging asana, eagerness can come and one action might be lost or diminished. In forward bend can you still stay pressing down through your feet as you engage your abdomen to forward bend the spine and keep reaching through the top of your head?
Each asana has its own unique pattern of engagement but the coactivation remains universal. Coactivation and balance requires equal effort in opposing directions and actions.

**BANDHAS AND BREATHING IN ASANA**

Bandhas are the energetic locks of asana practice that assist the correct movements of Prana, prana vayus. It is also felt by breath that bandhas in asana will help direct the limbs and spine to the best alignment. Typically, inhales encourage extension, exhales contraction. The body is designed around the function of breathing and moves to optimal alignment by disciplining breath. Learning to follow the suggestions of the breath while in asana makes leaps in body and mental intelligence. A pose that was once a struggle becomes easy! This is the perfecting of the asana. The mind becomes clear while aware of the body, prana, and its own mental space, generating spiritual awareness, the experience of unity.

**DRISHTI IN ASANA**

Drishti is the direction of your gaze, or focus. Drishti refers to a way of anchoring into the asana by the gaze of the eyes. Drishti can increase endurance and help glean more intelligence from the asana. As the alignment settles into place, the eyes rest calmly onto a single point. There is also awareness to the corners of the eyes, the peripheral vision, and the whole space of your vision while a stream of concentration flows to the point. This is a means of sense withdrawal and strengthening concentration. It also increases kinesthetic and spatial awareness of your body.

**Question for consideration: What is the edge?**

An edge is an imaginary border or limit. When you look very, very closely (might need a microscope!) at any edge it becomes more irregular. The closer you look the more complex and delineating it becomes. Infinity again. This is the same in yoga asana. The more time you observe your edge, even in the course of a single practice, your awareness and energy can expand significantly. So, how do you practice at the edge?

Go in the asana so you feel close to the maximum mobility or effort but never feel stressed to maintain the posture. Your breath should continue to be smooth and rhythmic and you should still feel connected to your centre. Those that are open in asana in significant ranges of flexibility should look instead to the edge in their breath. Those who have truly mastered their breath should look for the edge in their refinement of steadiness and concentration.

**SUGGESTED MEDIA TO WATCH:**

Search Fractals or Mandelbrot Set on YouTube
4.5 | NINE COMMON DRISHTI USED IN ASANA

DRISHTI TRANSLATES TO: ‘DIRECTION OF YOUR GAZE’

In modern yoga it is considered normal to practice with eyes open, in this case, drishti is used to enhance focus, concentration and in some cases balance. Therefore, when you begin teaching, you may be expected to be guiding people with eyes open. At Vikasa we recommend practicing with the eyes closed as much as possible in order to expedite your inner development and awareness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Postures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANUGSTA MA DYAI</td>
<td>The middle of the thumbs</td>
<td>Upward facing dog and standing forward fold poses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTKATA BHRUMADHYE</td>
<td>The third eye, eye brow centre</td>
<td>Warrior I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASAGRAI</td>
<td>The tip of the nose</td>
<td>Navel, as in downward facing dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NABI CHAKRA</td>
<td>Navel</td>
<td>Navel, as used in downward facing dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAHAYORAGRAI</td>
<td>Toes</td>
<td>Toes, as in hand to toe pose and most seated forward bends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HASTAGRAI</td>
<td>Hands</td>
<td>Hands, as used in triangle and warrior II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARSVA</td>
<td>Side</td>
<td>Side, as used in seated spinal twists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URDHVA</td>
<td>Up</td>
<td>Upwards, as used in warrior angle, balancing half moon, and prayer twist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAITRAYOHMADYA OR BROOMADHYA</td>
<td>Third eye or forehead</td>
<td>Third eye or forehead, as used in fish, upward forward fold, and reverse warrior II</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.6 | THE FIVE MAIN MOVEMENTS OF THE SPINE

**AXIAL EXTENSION**
This is a special movement. It is the lengthening of your spine by reducing its curvature. It happens when there is a co-activation of supporting and stabilizing muscles on the front and back sides of the body. Coming into this alignment makes us alert and focused, ready to move in any direction.

**Exploratory practice**
In seated position, lengthen the spine with an inhalation without arching the back but allowing the collar bones to move back slightly, shoulders relaxed. Push down into your feet or sits bones and stretch up through the crown of the head.
As you exhale, maintain the spinal extension and breathe. This movement creates the feeling that should be in every asana; stable and light, lifting, yet grounded. Creating space by extension creates posture that is stabilising for the joints.

**SIDE BENDS**
The anatomy of the body is not symmetrical, most notably in the internal organs. Side bending is a way to give special attention to each unique side of the body, stretching the side body and intercostal muscles for direct increase of deep breathing. You can also find more awareness in left-right postural balance.

**Exploratory practice**
Sit on the floor with left leg straight and right leg bent. Hold your right thigh with you left hand and lift your right arm up.
Bend your upper body to your left, look up to your right arm. Right side chest should constantly be lifted to create or maintain a stretch on the right side of your torso.
Breathe and maintain a gaze (Drishti) to your right arm. Repeat other side.

**NOTES**

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45
FORWARD BENDS
Forward bends are calming to the nervous system. Poor posture however, is typically chronic. Forward bending of the spine in some portion or another can have the same effect as any calming agent, eventually becomes sedating.

People energetically draw inwards to escape their stress and hide themselves. A forward bend performed intentionally can give deep rest and release.

Forward bends can be done primarily in two ways, with a straight spine in axial extension, or a rounded spine using abdominal engagement.

Exploratory practice
Sitting with legs together, inhale, raise the arms and extend the spine. As you exhale, move forward maintaining extension of the spinal column. Continue the movement forward until you feel progressive extension from the lower portions of the spine to the middle spine then the upper spine, and the neck last, moving as fluidly as possible.

Then begin to engage your abdomen as you round your spine one vertebrae at a time while maintaining grounding into your seat and back of your legs.

BACK BENDS
Back bends are also a special movement. Their occurrence in typical use is not very frequent and usually not very intense considering the range of possible movement with training.

They are amazingly healing for the spine because a back bend encourages the spine towards a balanced alignment.

Back bending also strengthens the supporting back muscles that become weak or over stretched so easily by unhealthy posture.

Back bends are incredibly invigorating, and said to open the heart.

Exploratory practice
Standing on your knees, hip distance apart, bring the hands to the hips. Toes can be pointed or on the floor. Inhale, lift the chest, look back and slowly bend back as your push your hands into your hips. Hold the back bend at a point where you can maintain your breath.
TWISTS

Twisting the body is like wringing out a cloth. The action of twisting happens mostly in the lumbar and cervical spine. The thoracic spine does not twist very much because of the ribcage.

The lower spine may not twist much due to calcification, compression, or even fusion, of the lower lumber joints and sacrum.

Twists massage and stretch the organs flushing their fluids through the tissues, stimulating their functions. It also creates therapeutic alignment for the spine in extension and so creates better posture with practice.

Whenever we twist, we cross the sagittal plane of the body.

**Exploratory practice**

Spine twist, right side.

Sit with the right leg bent (or straight if you have restricted movement).

Bring the left foot over your leg on the floor, until the foot is near the knee, but flat on the floor.

Sit bones should be flat on the floor.

Right arm behind your back, hand on the floor.

Put the left elbow over your knee, with your palm open and perpendicular to the floor.

Inhale lift your chest up, twist to your right and look over your right shoulder. Keep your spine straight.

Hold at a point where you can still breathe.

Repeat other side.

‘Play with your energies, changing forms, but always in balance’

**VISUAL IMAGE**

Go deeper into the movement and picture what is happening with the spine. In each one of these movements the space and pressure between vertebrae is unique. In extension, we are equalizing spaces and pressure. In forward, backward, and side bends we open one side of the spine while closing another. In twists, the vertebrae rotate relative to one another and other body parts.

**Extra Concept for Practice:**

**DANCING AS YOGA**

As we discuss in the Thought Experiment (see Meditation section), the universe of form is impulsively creative. Spontaneous dancing, ‘like no one’s watching’, also called ecstatic dance, is an amazing way to join this impulse and feel invigorated with life. Let down your ego to enter into the trance this practice offers and the body will also intuitively heal itself.

You can shake off your tension, drop your mental baggage, and let the universe dance through you.
4.7 | SEQUENCING

CLASS STRUCTURE

A BALANCED CLASS
HA - THA

SUB STYLES
DIRECTION OF MOBILITY FOR LEGS, ARMS AND SPINE

A. Legs: hips (6) knees (3/1) ankles (6)
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

B. Arms: shoulders (6) elbows (3/1) wrists (3)
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   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

C. Spine: neck (6) ribcage (6) waist (6)
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
POSITION IN SPACE

A. Head up

B. Head down

C. Belly up

D. Belly down

E. Side down (right/left)
LEVELS OF COMPLEXITY

A. Level one – muscular (single range of mobility, no combination of arms and legs, simple dynamic stretching and strengthening)

B. Level two – tendons and ligaments (combinations can be used, deeper stretches eg. splits, feet behind head, and more arm balances eg. handstand/forearm stand)

C. Level three – joint capsules (combinations, and negative angles ie frog with toes on belly, splits with blocks under feet)

D. Level four – hyper-mobility (circus performers!)
## QUALITY/PURPOSE OF ASANA

<table>
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<th>A. Flexibility</th>
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1. Greeting
2. Om 3 times
3. Intent / Gratitude (Find at least 5 things from yesterday to be grateful about, 5 things about professional life, 5 things about personal life, 5 things about yourself, or explain about being in the state of flow, FLOW = being happy in the present moment, but having a clear vision of your future. Gratitude practice leads to happiness in the present moment)
4. Nauli
5. Kapalabhati (3 rounds)
6. Warm up
7. Sun Salutations classic (3-5 rounds)
8. Asana practice
9. Pranayama Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing)
10. Pranayama Ujjayi Breathing
11. Chakra breathing meditation (hot/cold)
12. Pipe breathing (Spine is a pipe, inhale up the spine cold, exhale down the spine hot)
13. Silence/awareness meditation
14. Savasana (15 min)
15. Gratitude / Dedication (Come back to gratitude/flow, or make this practice an offering: I dedicate this practice to the spiritual liberation of all beings. By this practice may we quickly reach enlightenment, and take all others to the same state of consciousness)
16. Om 3 times
1. Greeting

2. Om 3 times

3. Intent / Gratitude (Find at least 5 things from yesterday to be grateful about, 5 things about professional life, 5 things about personal life, 5 things about yourself, or explain about being in the state of flow, FLOW = being happy in the present moment, but having a clear vision of your future. Gratitude practice leads to happiness in the present moment)

4. Kapalabhati (3 rounds)

5. Vikasa core salutations

6. Asana practice

7. Pranayama Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing)

8. Pranayama 4+1 (4 short forceful breaths followed by one long, and then retention) x 5 times

9. Pranayama Pratyahara breathing (inhale nose, exhale mouth with Ssssss sound) x 8 times

10. Chakra Breathing meditation (hot/cold)

11. And/or Star Breathing meditation

12. Silence/awareness meditation

13. Lights off

14. Savasana (15 min)

15. Gratitude / Dedication (Come back to gratitude/flow, or make this practice an offering: I dedicate this practice to the spiritual liberation of all beings. By this practice may we quickly reach enlightenment, and take all others to the same state of consciousness)

16. Om 3 times

17. Rub your palms, cover eyes with warm palms

18. Lights on
4.10 | VINYASA

WHAT IS VINYASA?
‘Vinyasa’ is derived from the Sanskrit term nyasa, which means “to place,” and the prefix vi, “in a special way”— in the context of hatha yoga, it is taken as linking of one asana to the next, or a dynamic flow from posture to posture. To put it simply: In modern yoga terms, in the context of hatha yoga, the common understanding of vinyasa is as a ‘flowing’ sequence of specific asanas coordinated with breathing patterns, or breath-syncronised movement.

WHY VINYASA?
Vinyasa has a wide range of beneficial effects for the body and the practice. Sequences of vinyasa movements will help you understand your range of motion, structural tensions, and overall body awareness. It improves coordination, stimulates the flow of blood and lymph through the body, accelerating your metabolism, immune responses, and removal of toxicity. Vinyasa done with the whole body, and more specifically, sequences in which the spine must change shape, will most powerfully achieve these effects.

Simple movements for one portion of the body at a time, such as arms, or even just one leg, can be used for working with specific issues in joints or muscles and increasing awareness in those areas.

Vinyasa is a good way to warm up the body for deeper stretches in static asana and helps focus the mind on physical sensations and breath awareness. All parts of the body should keep a feeling of connection to the centre of the body while moving. Vinyasa is often done in repetitions. Vinyasa is also the way we explore from one static asana to the next to experience different states of consciousness by patterns of the nervous system.
PRANAYAMA IS THE Yogic BASED SCIENCE OF BREATH CONTROL, UTILIZING DIFFERENT, BUT GENERALLY RHYTHMICAL TECHNIQUES. PRANA IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE, ENERGY, VITALITY AND STRENGTH. IT IS SAID THAT WITHOUT PRANA (ENERGY) THERE IS NO LIFE.

Hindi speaking Indians have the habit of dropping the final ‘a’ in Sanskrit words.
So pranayama is actually ‘prana-ayama’.
This translates into ‘un-obstructing the breath’, not breath control, as it is commonly translated.
However, when instructing methods of pranayama the word, ‘control’, is commonly used when speaking the English language.
PRANA

Prana is life force energy, vitality and power. Prana is the foundation and essence of all life; the energy and vitality that permeates the entire universe. Prana flows in everything that exists. Prana is the connecting link between the material world, consciousness and mind. It is what makes life on the material level possible.

Prana regulates all physical functions, for example; the breath, the supply of oxygen, digestion, elimination and much more.

The function of the human body is much like a transformer, receiving energy and then eliminating it. If a person, or a room has a healthy, harmonious vibration, we say, ‘There is good prana (energy) here’. Illness, on the other hand, disturbs or blocks the flow of prana. As we develop the ability to control prana, we gain harmony and health of both body and mind. In addition to this, with a long and consistent practice an expansion of consciousness is experienced.

We gain prana from the world around us in different ways:
• Through the food we eat
• Through the air we breathe
• Through the environment around us
• Through connection with our higher and deeper self.

PRANAYAMA

Pranayama is not only breathing exercises. Pranayama is the technique of mastering the nervous system and the subtle conduits of life force, the nadis, by gradually slowing down the breathing cycle with the goal to reach an ultimate state of silence by stilling the breath, and thus the mind.

Through breath control, the innate connection between breath and all physiological processes is experienced, as well as a glimpse into the being who exists regardless of breath.

Besides this, pranayama, and all steps following in the Raja Yoga system, also remove us from interacting with the forms with which we may have karmic entanglement. The retreat of inner practice can give a clearer perspective when returning to daily routine life and inspire the right actions for making spiritual progress.

5.1 | WHAT IS PRANAYAMA?

Questions for discussion and written assignment

How has your breath changed since beginning Yoga practice?
What do you use breath control for now besides on the mat?
5.2 PRINCIPLES OF BREATHING AND BANDHA

Breath control and observation builds the bridges connecting body, energy, mind, and soul. The entire system of the breathing apparatus can be trained such that even when we are unconscious of our breath it will model its training.

Breathing can operate either by instinctual function or conscious control. Many people go through life without too much attention to it until they discover Yoga and how much they actually can control their breathing and be better for it. Everything is simplified when we feel easy and smooth breathing. Practicing hatha yoga with awareness centred on breathing takes the practice to another level not possible otherwise. By cultivating deeper movements of breath and savouring the pauses between, a more intuitive and present approach to practice and life can be felt.

**EXHALATION - RECHAKA**
The action of exhalation occurs when the diaphragm begins its movements back upwards, the Intercostal muscles contract, and the abdominals and shoulder girdle can assist as well.

Yogic exhalation draws movement inwards and downwards to mula bandha. It creates a connecting feeling through the body and to the Earth. It comes with the relaxation response, calming the mind, the switch to the parasympathetic nervous system, and the release of behavioural stress.

**ABDOMINAL BREATHING**
This is breathing primarily with expansion in the abdomen, the same as the way babies breathe. It is very relaxing and helps to softly recharge a tired body and mind. It is used more frequently in Chinese spiritual and martial arts such as Chi Gong, and focuses on balancing prana in the lower chakra.

**THORACIC BREATHING**
This is breathing with movement in the abdomen, withheld by maintaining the energetic lock of the bandha, to breathe primarily with expansion in the ribcage. This cultivates greater lung capacity, massages lower organs, and increases digestive power. It pulls prana into the upper chakras and develops spiritual energy.

**INHALATION - PURAKA**
The action of inhalation is initiated by the diaphragm drawing downwards, creating suction, and pulling the tissue of the lungs into the vacuum between their surface and the inner surface of the ribcage. It can be modified in a variety of ways through the action of bandha, the abdominal muscles, the intercostal muscles, and even the shoulder girdle, back, and chest muscles as they cover a large portion of the ribcage.

All of these muscles, when trained, can give us great control over which portion of the lungs we expand by inhalation, especially when applied in the variety of yoga asana. Inhalation stimulates movement, both in mind and the body, to ‘rise’ upwards and outwards. It has a wakeful energy, curious and aware.
COMPLETE BREATHING

Complete breathing utilizes abdominal and thoracic expansion. It is best experienced laying down on the back as in savasana. After a few moments of breathing this way it is possible to greatly extend the breath and feel as if you could breathe between one pair of ribs at a time. It is excellent for learning the actions of breathing by their physical sensations and it is highly therapeutic. You may be able to extend one cycle of breath to one whole minute or longer.

SO HUM BREATHING (REFERRED TO AS UJJAYI BREATHING) – MASTERING OF BREATH

It is performed by slightly contracting the glottis, the muscle you use to swallow, making the passage way for breathing narrower and straw like.

Just as a thin straw works with less suction than a larger one, by using ujjayi you create deeper flow of the breath with less movement of the diaphragm which lengthens the duration of your breath, also giving the intercostals more time to relax, finally resulting in a fuller inhalation. It results in a characteristic broad chest look.

Ujjayi can also be used with the glottis nearly closed and stronger, drawing out phlegm and mucus from surrounding tissues. Ujjayi is also the perfect monitor for performance in asana. Breath should tend towards silky smooth and regular. Tension or unevenness in ujjayi breath is easily noticed and indicates faulty or over exerted asana and vinyasa.

MULA BANDHA – ROOT LOCK

The root lock is situated between the anus and the genitals, above the perineum. It is activated by engaging the ring shaped pubo-coccygeal (PC) muscle, located under the vertical axis of the spine and forward of the tail bone.

Using this bandha keeps prana from dispersing out and downwards and redirects it upwards. It also stimulates muladhara chakra and gives a foundational point for concentration. The muscle also has the feeling of lift and when engaged it automatically makes a subtle engagement of uddiyana bandha. It is possible for women to feel the lift as high as the cervix. Mula bandha creates an energetic stimulation. Contract it as much as possible while also remaining calm.

UDDIYANA BANDHA – LIFT GENERATING LOCK

The word uddiyana means flying upwards. There are two ways bandha is performed. By keeping the abdominal muscles withheld and rooted to mula bandhas, during inhalation, our breath expansion moves upwards and outwards creating an open heart feeling.
During the exhale, the abdominals can draw in and down, stabilizing the spine. Focus to a point slightly below and behind the navel and imagine it being tied to mula bandha. Imagine the two points moving towards each other is a great way to develop balance with their practice.

Essentially uddiyana is whatever keeps the energy moving up. The second way of practice is what I call the ‘full’ technique, the special cleansing, uddiyana bandha kriya described in the Kriyas section.

**JALANDHARA BANDHA**
This is the upper most energetic lock which is only used during kumbhaka, breath retentions. It is performed by lowering the chin, lifting the chest and moving the shoulders back. The tongue touches the soft palate and breath is more easily held. When applied with the other three bandhas, prana can be controlled and inner movements stilled. The degree of lowering the chin depends on the shape of your vertebrae. It is not necessary for the chin to touch the chest.

**BREATH SIDEDNESS**
In almost all human beings the flow of breathing alternates between left and right nostril dominance throughout the course the day. The interval between sides is thought to be directed by the sympathetic nervous system and influenced by posture, physical and mental activity, emotional states (a bodily and mental phenomenon), and metabolic cycles.

You can trigger this switch intentionally by laying down on one side of your body to open the other side. The body’s intelligence will realize it can’t breathe deeply into the side against the floor or mattress and so eventually open your other-side nostril. This can also be achieved by the use of the yoga danda, a intricately carved stick that resembles a walking stick and is used the same as a little crutch. It ‘tricks’ the body into the same response, opening breath on the opposite side.

Each side corresponds to brain activity in the opposite side’s hemisphere and other polar dynamics through the body-mind complex are affected, which gives breathing on each side distinct qualities. The switch occurs by erectile tissue within each nostril, expanding to diminish flow, and shrinking to increase flow on its respective side. It is possible for breath to be equally open on both sides and this is ideal for yoga practice. More of this will be discussed in pranayama and the nadi shodhana technique.

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**BANDHAS**

- Jalandhara Bandha
- Uddiyana Bandha
- Mula Bandha
5.3 | THE VAYUS

THE VAYUS

Through exploration of the body and breath, ancient yogis discovered that prana (life force energy) could be subdivided into energetic components. They called the components, vayus (which means, ‘winds’).

The 5 vayus of prana all have very subtle yet distinct energy qualities, including specific functions and directions of energy flow.

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT VAYUS ARE PRANA VAYU AND APANA VAYU.

The yogis were able to control and cultivate these vayus by simply bringing their focus and awareness to them. By doing this, they were not only able to create optimal health and well-being, but were able to activate the primordial kundalini energy to obtain states of samadhi.

Complete mastery of the vayus is not necessary to improve our inward focus and the ability to feel the subtleties within the body, however cultivating an awareness of one or more of the vayus will help to deepen our awareness of breath and body to enrich our yoga practice.
1. Prana Vayu
Prana vayu is situated in the head, centred in the third eye, and its energy pervades the chest region. The flow of prana vayu is inwards and upward. It nourishes the brain and the eyes and governs reception of all things; food, air, senses and thoughts. This vayu is the fundamental energy in the body and directs and feeds into the other four vayus.

To experience prana vayu: close your eyes, sit or stand with a long spine and relaxed body, and as you inhale, feel an energy flowing up the torso from the belly to the third eye.

2. Apana Vayu
Apana vayu is situated in the pelvic floor and its energy pervades the lower abdomen. The flow of apana vayu is downwards and out and its energy nourishes the organs of digestion, reproduction and elimination. Apana vayu governs the elimination of all substances from the body; carbon monoxide, urine, stool, etc.

To experience apana vayu: Close your eyes, sit or stand with a long spine and relaxed body, as you exhale, feel an energy flowing down the torso from the top of the head to the tailbone.

3. Vyana Vayu
Vyana vayu is situated in the heart and lungs and flows throughout the entire body. The flow of vyana vayu moves from the centre of the body to the periphery. It governs circulation of all substances throughout the body, and assists the other vayus with their functions.

To experience vyana vayu: Close your eyes, sit or stand with a long spine and relaxed body. As you inhale, feel the breath radiating outward from the naval to the arms and legs.

4. Udana Vayu
Udana vayu is situated in the throat and it has a circular flow around the neck and head. It functions to hold us up and governs speech, self expression and growth.

To experience udana vayu: Close your eyes, sit or stand with a long spine and relaxed body. As you inhale and exhale, feel the breath circulating around and through the head and the neck.

5. Samana Vayu
Samana vayu is situated in the abdomen, with its energy centred in the navel. The flow of samana vayu moves from the periphery of the body to the centre. It governs the digestion and assimilation of all substances; food, air, experiences, emotions and thoughts.

To experience samana vayu: Close your eyes, sit or stand with a long spine or relaxed body. As you inhale and exhale, feel the breath rising and falling in the front, sides and back of the torso.
### Vayu Actions, Elements and Chakras

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<th>Vayu</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Chakra</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. PRANA</td>
<td>Entering and Raising</td>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Anahata</td>
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<td>2. APANA</td>
<td>Grounding and Refining</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Muladhara</td>
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<td>3. UDANA</td>
<td>Articulating and Organising</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Vissudha</td>
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<td>4. SAMANA</td>
<td>Digestive and Gravitational</td>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Manipura</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. VYANA</td>
<td>Distributing and Radiating</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Svadhistana</td>
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The first movement of prana is the movement of creation, to enter into existence. Thus, in the body, the inhalation is a function of prana, as energy enters the centre of the chest and expands outwards lifting physically, energetically, mentally and emotionally. Governs ingestion.

In the body the counter movement of prana. Exhalation, expels and moves downwards. Governs excretion.

The energy operating the intelligence of speech, processes of the mind, and intuition.

Within the core of the body, it draws things to the centre and assimilates them.

Throughout the entire system to expand and disperse.
IDA, PINGALA AND SUSHUMNA

Nadis are energy channels that do not have physical components. For practicality, we can think of the nadis as the electrical patterns of the nervous system, but not the structure - however, this is still not an entirely accurate description as they function at a more subtle level than this. There are quoted to be a staggering 72,000 nadis in the human body. Considering the intricacies of the body-mind system this is not too surprising. An awareness of three nadis is satisfactory for another way of understanding how to achieve energetic balance.

Ida and Pingala Nadis
Ida and Pingala correspond to the breath as sidedness we mentioned earlier in the principles of breath. Ida is the left channel, denoted by left side breathing and right hemisphere brain activity. Its qualities are said to be introspective, abstract, cooling, and feminine, symbolized by the moon. Pingala is the right channel, denoted by right side breathing and left hemisphere brain activity. Its qualities are said to be decisive and extroverted, logical, heating, and masculine, symbolized by the sun.

Sushumna Nadi
Sushumna nadi is the balance of these two nadis, or, a unique one which can be accessed only by their balance. Sushumna is the central channel for kundalini to rise through the chakras and generate awakening. Sushumna nadi seems to have a corresponding physical nerve, the vagus nerve.

The vagus nerve connects virtually all the vital organs with the brain and does not pass through the spine. It sends signals to and from the brain to monitor and regulate life functions.

The kundalini experience and the metaphysical chakras are found along the channel of this nerve, in front of the spine.
Emotions have a lot to do with breathing. When a person is relaxed and happy, diaphragmatic breathing is a natural result. When people are angry, fearful, or otherwise ‘tight,’ they mostly use thoracic or clavicular breathing. Some people don’t even realise that they freeze between breaths, stopping the breathing process altogether. This can happen when these emotions are conscious or unconscious. It has been suggested by some scientists, that perhaps people use thoracic or clavicular breathing in order to block angry, aggressive, anxious or fearful emotions from their conscious minds. These powerful emotions have strong associations with the lower parts of the body, including associations with the lower chakras, so it only stands to reason that the breath is shallower in order to escape these emotions, or at least tone them down.

Just as emotions can trigger certain breathing patterns, which can be learned and habitualized, breathing can also recreate or reinforce an emotional atmosphere. It becomes a potential tool for interrupting, inspiring, or controlling emotional response patterns. The breath plays a crucial role in whether one’s disposition is calm or anxious.

Chest breathing is also a result of self-consciousness about image in this society, since abdominal breathing is not seen as a very attractive thing in adults. The female hour glass figure is preserved by using chest breathing rather than diaphragmatic breathing.

Chest breathing is a part of fight or flight reaction and it causes the human organism to think that it is always in a stressful or dangerous situation. Chest breathing gives the mind anxiety, unsteadiness and tension.
All meditation techniques, or relaxation techniques are ineffective unless chest breathing is replaced by diaphragmatic breathing. The habit of breathing into the diaphragm must be consciously practiced with diligence before it becomes a person’s natural and unconscious way of breathing.

The diaphragm is the muscle that causes the lungs to move and is located underneath the lungs, above the stomach. When the diaphragm moves downward, the lungs inhale. When the diaphragm moves upward, the lungs exhale. Diaphragmatic breathing is evident when the lower belly extends on an inhale rather than the chest.

There are basically three types of breathing:
1) Thoracic breathing (mid chest)
2) Clavicular breathing (upper chest/throat, collarbone area)
3) Diaphragmatic breathing (belly, abdomen)

1. DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING
Diaphragmatic breathing is the most efficient breathing there is. This is because most of the blood is circulating in the lower parts of the lungs, and oxygen infusion is mostly happening there. The diaphragmatic breathing pulls the oxygen lower into the lungs, thus increasing the efficiency of oxygen infusion into the blood stream because the oxygen is exposed to more of the blood. Interestingly, children and infants do this naturally. It is only later that adult humans stop using this most efficient way of breathing.

2. THORACIC BREATHING
Thoracic breathing (chest breathing), fills only the middle and upper portion of the lungs, not the lower portion where most of the blood is.

3. CLAVICULAR BREATHING
Clavicular breathing is centered around the collarbones, and only comes into play when the body needs great amounts of oxygen, for instance, while exercising.

These three types of breathing can be coordinated into an exercise in which a deep breath is taken. This is a complete yogic breath incorporating all of the lung capacity, not just portions of it. First the lower part of the lungs are filled, diaphragmatic (belly), the middle portion is filled, thoracic (mid-chest), then the uppermost part, clavicular (upper tips of the lungs near collarbone) is filled. An example would be a yawn or a sigh. Everyone has experienced how relaxing it is to let out a big sigh or yawn.

NOTES

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5.7 | TYPES OF BREATHING
5.8 | PRANAYAMA TECHNIQUES

ALL PRANAYAMA, EVEN VIGOROUS ONES, SHOULD HAVE A FEELING OF EASE AND CONTROL. IF PHYSICAL STRAIN IN THE CHEST IS DEVELOPED, PRESSURE AROUND THE HEART, THROAT, HEAD AND EYES IS FELT, DISCONTINUE THE PRACTICE. SIT CALMLY FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, FOCUSING ON AN EASIER PHASE OR CALMING OF THE BREATH. IT IS GOOD TO KEEP IN MIND TO COMPLETELY EXHALE BEFORE STARTING THE PATTERNS OF BREATH CONTROL.

NADI SHODHANA / ANULOMA VILOMA
Alternate Nostril Breathing

One of the goals of alternate nostril breathing is to develop balance between the two energies of ida and pingala nadis to open sushumna nadi and stoke kundalini. The pattern of nadi shodhana is exhale left, inhale left, exhale right, inhale right then repeat.

Description
Nadi shodhana pranayama is used to clean the nasal cavities as well as the subtle astral channels in preparation for kriya meditation practice. It is highly recommended making this preparatory practice a habit. It calms the body and mind, and helps to become more aware of the currents flowing up and down the spine. It is this awareness that must be perfected in mastering the first kriya.

Procedure:
Initially close the right nostril as you are told to do in the case of anuloma-viloma pranayama. Inhale slowly through the left nostril as deeply as possible. Retain the inhaled air according to your capacity. Do mula bandha and jalandhara bandha simultaneously. After keeping yourself in this position, unlock jalandhara bandha and breathe out completely but slowly through the right side nostril. Keep your breath out for sometime and then inhale slowly through the right nostril. Retain the inhaled air for sometime and then breathe out through the left nostril slowly but thoroughly. Repeat the exercise as many times as you can consistently. This pranayama is for the chakra and the nadi. If it is practiced without using hands on nostrils then it increases concentration and is more beneficial because one fully concentrates on the breath and the mind becomes totally stable and is under control. There should not be any sound while inhaling or exhaling. This should be done at least thrice and up to as many times one feels like doing it. Initially the ratio of puraka, antah kumbhak and recak should be kept as 1:2:2 i.e. if puruka is done for 10 seconds then antah kumbhak (internal kumbhak) should be done for 20 seconds and recak should be done slowly for another 20 seconds. Later on the ratio may be changed to 1:4:2. After having done this, bahya kumbhak (external kumbhak) can also be included in this and the ratio will be 1:4:2:2 for puruka, antah kumbhak, recak and bahya kumbhak respectively. This should not be done at an extremely slow pace. Keeping in mind the count of pranas, it should be done gradually, the slower will be the speed of prana the better it will be, inhaling at will, holding and then
exhaling at will, is the actual criteria for the success of this pranayama. If done in this manner the need to take rest in between does not arise. While doing puruk, kumbhak and recak the chanting of OM and Gayatri mantra should be done in mind.

Nadi Shodhana / Anuloma Viloma Benefits
- Regular practice of this pranayama has the capacity of cleansing all your innumerable nadis, which makes the body healthy, lustrous and strong.
- All kinds of diseases occurring due to the disturbance of vata dosha like rheumatism, gout, diseases pertaining to urinary and reproductive organs are cured. Besides, regular practice of this pranayama also cures diseases like cold, cataract, sinus, etc. which have reached a chronic stage. The three doshas of vata, pitta, kapha regularise themselves and assume proper proportions.
- Blockages in the arteries of the heart are removed and the arteries become clean, making the circulation unimpeded. If this pranayama is practiced for 3 or 4 months regularly, 30 to 40% of blockages in the arteries are dissolved and removed, preventing the phenomenon of heart attack. Pathogenic cholesterol, triglycerides, H.D.L. and L.D.L. also get controlled, making the arterial channels clear for effective and unimpeded flow of blood in the heart.
- Negative thinking is replaced by positive approach to life. It increases enthusiasm and spirit, the sadhaka becomes fearless and feels blissful.

In short, this pranayama has the effect of cleansing the body, and the mind and cures almost all the diseases from which the sadhaka has been suffering.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA
Victorious breath, Ocean breath, Cobra breathing,

Ujjayi - “one who is victorious”
Requirements: Find your meditation seat

Description
Ujjayi pranayama is sometimes referred to as Ocean Breath, or more contemporarily, Darth Vader Breath. With this exercise, you must breathe in and out deeply through both nostrils while producing a certain sound in the throat. The inhalation sound is louder than the exhalation. This exercise is normally practiced between six and twelve times. The inhaling breath should be of the same duration as the exhaling breath. The purpose of this exercise is to strengthen the diaphragm, calm the breath, and encourage the healthy flow of prana.

The most common errors made in ujjayi pranayama are:
1) vocalising the sound
2) not breathing using the diaphragm
3) not placing the right amount of pressure on your breathing process.
Diaphragmatic breathing means to use the muscle located above your abdomen and under your lungs. When breathing correctly, the chest cavity will expand and contract with each inhale and exhale. Again, the vocal cords are not used in any way in this exercise.

**Procedure**

Sit in an asana in which you meditate. Contract the muscles of your throat as much as you can while doing puruaka and when air is inhaled with the contracted throat muscles, a sound similar to snoring will be experienced. While sitting in dhyana asana inhale air through both the nostrils. On doing so, the air should touch the muscles of the contracted throat, but there should not be any friction in the nostrils. In the beginning, do not do kumbhak and do puruka-recak only. After practice of some days, kumbhak should be done for twice the time taken in purak and recak. If you do kumbhak at both the stages for 10 seconds, perform jaladharabandha and mula bandha simultaneously. In this pranayama, keep the right side nostril closed and exhale only through the left nostril.

**Ujjayi Benefits**

- It is beneficial for those who suffer from cough, cold and bronchitis throughout the year. It is good for those who suffer from tonsillitis, thyroid, insomnia, mental tension, high blood pressure, constipation, vata diseases, tuberculosis, etc.
- Its regular practice helps in getting rid of throat diseases and gives a sweet voice to the individual practising it.
- Ujjayi is also good for kundalini jagaran, ajapa-japa dhyana - chanting of the mantra in mind, soundlessly, etc. It cures lisping in children.

**BHASTRIKA - BELLOWS BREATHE**

**Description**

In the context of kriya yoga, Bhastrika pranayama can be used to perform a tapping upon anahata, similarly to how navi kriya performs a tapping upon manipura. It helps to clear any blocks inside the chakra or in the sushumna, a few inches (cms.) above and below.

Outside of kriya yoga, bhastrika pranayama is generally considered a hatha yoga technique with the following benefits:

1. Massages the area around the diaphragm, thus dispelling poisons from the lungs and other organs.
2. Boosts the supply of oxygen to the cells.
3. When practised for even a few minutes per day, helps to ward off diseases.

Bhastrika pranayama should not be performed by those who are pregnant or experience circulatory problems.
Procedure
Sit in a comfortable asana. Breathe in through both the nostrils forcefully, till the lungs are full and diaphragm is stretched. Then breathe out forcefully also, but see that the abdominal cavity does not blow up due to the air breathed in. Depending upon the capacity and health of an individual, this pranayama can be done in three variable speeds; slow, moderate and fast.

Individuals with weak lungs and heart should do this at a slow speed while performing recak and puruka. A healthy individual and one used to doing it, should do it initially at a slow speed and then gradually increase the speed to moderate and then high. This pranayama should be done for 5 to 10 minutes.

Special Notes
Those suffering from high blood pressure or from any heart disease should not do this pranayama.

While breathing in, the abdominal area should not blow up. You have to fill the air in the chest area, i.e. up to the diaphragm, so that the part of the chest with its ribs swells. In the summer season, reduce the number of repetitions of this pranayama.

In case both the nostrils do not open on account of ailments like severe cough or sinus etc., such persons should first close the right nostril and do respiration (exhalation as well as inhalation) through the left nostril. Then the left nostril should be closed and respiration should be done by the right nostril.

This method of alternate breathing should be continued at the desired speed; slow, moderate or fast, until both the nostrils open simultaneously. At the end, pranayama should be completed by doing recak and puraka through both ida and pingala.

Do this pranayama for the duration of three to five minutes everyday. While doing this pranayama, keep both the eyes closed and mentally chant the mantra “OM”.

Bhastrika Benefits
- Diseases like cold, cough, allergy, asthma, respiratory diseases of all kinds, are cured. Lungs become strong and due to the heart and head getting adequate quantity of pure and fresh air, health is improved.
- Diseases of the throat like thyroid, tonsils and other ailments of throat are cured.
- This pranayama brings about a proper balance of the three doshas i.e. vata, pitta, and kapha, and maintains their balance. Blood is purified and the body gets rid of foreign objects and toxins.
- Stabilises prana and calms the mind, and helps the upward journey of prana from muladhara chakra (base chakra) to sahsrar chakra (cerebral gland) and is helpful in the kundalini jagaran.

NOTES
KAPALABHATI - SKULL SHINING BREATHING

Description
‘Kapala’ means forehead and ‘Bhati’ means light. Hence, kapala-bhati refers to that exercise which makes the forehead luminous and lustrous. Kapala-bhati pranayama makes its sadhaka’s head luminous. This pranayama is a little different from bhasrika pranayama. In bhasrika pranayama, puruka and recak are done with the same amount of force, whereas in kapala-bhati more attention is to be given to the act of forcible recak.

Procedure
In short, breathe in normally and breathe out forcefully, so as to influence the organs of the abdominal area. In doing so, the abdominal area, also makes inward and outward movements and considerable force is applied to the manipura, svadhisthana and muladhara chakra. This pranayama should easily be done for five minutes. Persons suffering from acute and chronic diseases must practice it for 15 minutes or more as per their capability.

Duration
Do this pranayama at the start for a period of three minutes and gradually increase it to five minutes. Initially, if you feel tired in between, rest for awhile then resume. After practising for about two months, you will be able to perform this pranayama for five minutes at a stretch without any fatigue. This is the total duration for which it should be done. In the beginning, you may feel a little pain in the back or abdomen. But this will disappear after some practice. So do not give up. People whose glands secrete lots of bile inside the body are termed as pitta prakriti. They should not do this pranayama for more than 2 minutes during summer season.

Kapalabhati Benefits
• Face becomes lustrous and attractive.
• Diseases related to kapha like asthma, respiratory troubles, allergies, sinus, etc. are cured.
• Diseases of heart, lungs and brain get cured.
• Obesity, diabetes, flatulence, constipation, acidity and diseases pertaining to kidneys and prostate glands etc. are cured.
• If done regularly for five minutes daily, it relieves constipation. Blood sugar becomes normal and weight in the abdominal region reduces considerably. Blockages in the arteries are also cleared.
• Peace and stability of mind are achieved. No negative thoughts occur. Troubles like depression are cured.
• Chakra are purified and chakra from muladhara-chakra to sahsrar chakra are filled with pious cosmic energy.
• Organs in the abdominal cavity viz. stomach, pancreas, liver, spleen, intestine, prostate, and kidney function more efficiently and develop immunity towards diseases. This is the best exercise; benefits accrued by this cannot be obtained by several other asanas. It strengthens the intestines and improves digestion.

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BHRAMARI - BEE BREATHING TECHNIQUE

Description
Bhramari Pranayama or the Humming Bee Breath produces a sound similar to the humming of a bee. Bhramari comes from the Sanskrit word 'Bramar' which means a kind of black Indian bee. Bhramari pranayama has a soothing effect on the brain and calms the mind.

In Bhramari pranayama the humming sound is produced during slow exhalation. The eyes and ears are closed using the fingers during this process. This cuts off external sensory inputs of sound and sight and helps to internalize the consciousness. Practice of Bhramari pranayama can be a prelude to nada yoga or the science of meditation on internal sounds.

Procedure
Breathe in till your lungs are full of air. Close your ears with both the thumbs and eyes with the middle fingers of your hands on respective sides with little pressure. Press forehead with both the index fingers lightly. Close both the eyes. Then press eyes and nose bridge from the sides with the remaining fingers. Concentrate your mind on ajna chakra (between eyebrows) (See picture no. 4). Close your mouth. Begin slowly exhaling, making humming sound of a bee, while reciting "OM" mentally. Repeat the exercise 11 to 21 times according to your capacity.

Bhramari Benefits
With the practice of this pranayama, the mind becomes steady. It is beneficial for conditions like mental tension, agitation, high blood pressure, heart disease etc. It is also useful for meditation.

SITALI - COOLING BREATH

Description
Sitali Pranayama is often translated as 'the cooling breath' because the act of drawing the air across the tongue and into the mouth is said to have a cooling and calming effect on the nervous system.

Procedure
Sit in a comfortable asana. Place your palms on the knees of their respective sides. Bend the tongue from their extreme ends so as to form a cylindrical shape. Inhale through the tongue filling the lungs with air to their maximum capacity. Retain the air in kumbhak as long as you can with jalandhara bandha. Then close the mouth and exhale through the nostrils. Repeat again from the first stage to last as many times as possible (8 to 10 times preferably). In winters, it should not be practised for long durations.

Note
Jalandhara bandha can also be used along with the kumbhak. Sitali and sikari pranayama should not be done by those who are suffering from kapha and also the individuals who suffer from cold, cough tonsillitis.

Sitali Benefits
- It is beneficial in diseases of the throat. It also cures diseases like indigestion, fever and disorders of the spleen.
- It helps to establish control on thirst and hunger. This has been stated in the ancient books on 'yog'.
- It lowers high blood pressure and is beneficial in diseases caused by imbalance of pitta dosas. It also purifies blood.
The long and rhythmic phases of pranayama breathing train metabolic activities to become more efficient by going deeper into the ‘mode’ of each stage of breathing. This naturally quiets any extraneous activities such as an over active mind.

The most commonly recommended ratio of inhalation to exhalation is 1:2. Assuming a yogic lifestyle is applied, consistent practice is the most important factor in advancing in pranayama.

The body and mind adapts to the training, and breath duration and ratios progressively extend. As technique improves, feelings of ease, peace, and inner awareness increases.

**RHYTHMIC BREATHING AND THE METRONOME**

Often, in a beginners’ yoga class, a 1:1 breathing ratio will be used, as perhaps many of the students have never done rhythmic breathing before. The duration of the breath for a new student of pranayama should be about 4-6 seconds (or counts). Even if it is possible to breathe longer, for example, 10:10, it will be better to inhale not too long because the next ratio is 1:2. That would turn 10:10 to... 10:20. Pretty daunting. 4:8 however is achievable for most people.

Knowing when to increase the inhalation count is indicated by the exhalation. If the exhalation is able to be extended longer than twice as long, then you can increase the inhale accordingly. For practical time keeping, always extend the exhale to the next even count. 6, 8, 10 etc.

We recommend you use a metronome when practising or teaching pranayama. It will help you greatly in keeping focus and keeping aware of the rhythm. However, do not force yourself to match any expectations you may place on yourself. This tool is an aid and a reference for learning from your practice.

Follow the feelings in the body as they will indicate whether you are exceeding your capacity. There may also be times when your exhale becomes shorter. Again, change your inhale accordingly. As you practice sustaining the same rhythm it will become easier.

*In your pranayama practice in this course, we set the metronome to 60 bpm, or beats per minute.*
ADDING RETENTION - KUMBHAKA

Breath retention is the next stage in pranayama. As the nerves become pacified by extension of exhalation, retention can be held in utmost peace and stillness for contemplation on the self.

Typically, retention of inhalation is practiced for some time before retention of exhalation. Initially breath is only held for 1 count and then slowly increased to equal the count of inhalation. The commonly recommended pranayama ratio of inhalation to retention to exhalation is 1:1:2.

Eventually, the same procedure is used for retention of exhalation to achieve the ratio of 1:1:2:1. Usually the teacher will advise when one is fit to move to the next phase. Example of ratio for 4 second breath - 4 inhale : 4 hold : 8 exhale : 4 hold.

ADVANCED PRANAYAMA

Progression to more advanced rhythms should be steady and slow. It is paramount to always remain relaxed and practice pranayama in an unforced manner. There are an infinite number of different ratios which can be applied and generally they will move towards longer retentions relative to breath duration.

A very adept pranayama practitioner might practice 1:4:4:4 and use a very long breath, perhaps 8:36:36:36. This is possible but, could perhaps take decades of dedicated practice and diligent mind control.
MEDITATION IS COMMONLY INTERPRETED AS A PRACTICE WHEN IF FACT, MEDITATION IS ACTUALLY SOMETHING THAT HAPPENS AS A RESULT OF PRACTICING CONCENTRATION TECHNIQUES.

The goal of meditation is to essentially find out what is our essential nature, Peace, Happiness and Bliss.
Meditation (dhyana) is a precise technique of the cessation of the thought process and attaining a state of consciousness. Our normal waking state is often filled with thought processes pertaining perhaps to the unchangeable past or the undeterminable future or anxieties and stresses, etc, which makes it difficult for the mind to be calm, clear and kind.

Meditation provides the optimum conditions for training the mind to be clear of thoughts and allow for a practitioner to be familiarised with the qualities of mindfulness.

Meditation in the modern Western world is so loosely and inaccurately practised that it has created a lot of confusion around such a practice. Meditation is not thinking or contemplating, neither is it concentration nor movement. There is definitely no mental effort that needs to be exerted in meditation. Some people might use their yoga practice as part of a ‘moving meditation’ or perhaps use their gardening as part of a meditation practise. However, this is where the true meaning of meditation gets lost.

During meditation, the mind has to be clear, relaxed and inwardly focused. It is a state where the practitioner is in profound, deep peace. The mind is silent but still completely alert and awake. The mind is not focused on the external world or on the events taking place outside of the meditative space.

Meditation is a practise that allows for the practitioners to look within for answers. In our fast paced, modern world, we are often only taught to examine and look outwardly for evidences and answers and are often baffled as to why even after procuring what seems to be the right answers that our relationships still do not work, and why we are constantly disappointed and being let down in life. Only in the practise of meditation that one is able to put the whole mind into the body and only through meditation that one is able to develop control over the totality of the mind. This will enable a practitioner to look for the answers that are only available from the crevices of the mind that are usually unexamined, because the mind is undisciplined and distracted.

The goal of meditation is to essentially find out what is our essential nature; peace, happiness and bliss. However, the biggest obstacle - the mind, is unruly and those who attempt to meditate often find that they only experience fantasies, daydreams, etc. when they are in their seat of meditation. Deep meditation is the culmination of physical and mental stillness.

**MEDITATION ASANA**

It can be felt in asana that energy has different sensations of being grounded, lifted, floating, sinking, expanded, concentrated and so on. The pose we choose for meditation should be conducive for feeling centred and easy.

Meditation asana share two main features;
1) an upright spine
2) stability

The spine, in upright extension, provides the mental pose needed for sustained concentration. Stability calms all systems and gives us more internal awareness.

In classic meditation poses, the legs cross and the thighs form a wide base of support. The hands rest on the knees further helping to stabilize the spine. The individual parts support the total body alignment with minimum effort, yoga. At first the flexibility of your body is the main determining factor for which meditation asana you should use, then duration. Remember that you should be comfortable in the pose so as to focus easily on your inner being. Do not sit in a position that irritates or distracts you. Over time with asana practice, the body becomes more and more comfortable in seated asana for meditation.

**THE SANSKRIT DERIVATION OF THE WORD MEDITATION, ‘MEDHA’, MEANS WISDOM.**
6.2 | MEDITATION POSTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asana</th>
<th>Name and Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUKHASANA</td>
<td>EASY POSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sukhasana is a simple cross legged position. Compared to other cross legged positions it is not very stable. It is better suited for short meditation periods like at the beginning and end of hatha yoga classes. For those that cannot yet perform the following three classical meditation poses, and for casual sitting. For balance, in this, and each cross legged position, you should change the cross of the legs every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAJRASANA</td>
<td>THUNDERBOLT / DIAMOND POSE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Same as sukhasana it can be useful for short periods. Long holds can be straining to the knees and ankles and in extreme conditions can result in temporary paralysis of the muscles that flex the foot. If this pose is used with a thick cushion between the calves and thighs, or small angled bench, it can be one of the most comfortable seated poses as the knees are only partially flexed, pressures in the body are evenly spread out, and is easy to maintain an upright spine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWASTIKASANA</td>
<td>AUSPICIOUS POSE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This pose approaches lotus but is easier to accomplish. Pull one foot towards the genitals with the sole against the opposite thigh. Pull in the second food similarly and tucking the toes between the calf and thigh muscles only partially flexed, pressures in the body are evenly spread out, and is easy to maintain an upright spine. The downside is that it is still not as stable as the three classical seated poses. You should change the cross of the legs every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDDHASANA</td>
<td>ACCOMPLISHED POSE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This pose is claimed as the best for pranayama, meditation, and realization. It is also said to bring powers or siddhis to the yogi. Draw one heel inwards and close to the perenium. Draw the second inwards and over the genitals, stacking the ankles on top of one another and placing the toes between calf and thigh. The backs of both heels should be on the midsagittal plane. You should change the cross of the legs every day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PADMASANA</td>
<td>LOTUS POSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is the most stable of the meditation asana. Place the feet on the upper thigh of the opposite leg with the knees close to or touching the floor. The legs are essentially locked into place and this is what makes it possible to use this arrangement in many other poses as well as providing the unparalleled steadiness of this pose as the three classical seated poses. You should change the cross of the legs every day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is no mean feat to learn how to be still for the practice of meditation. The process of cultivating stillness starts with the body. In the yoga sutras of Patanjali, asana was basically posture for meditation. It is not what we commonly know as yoga poses. The posture (asana) for yoga meditation should be steady, stable, and motionless, as well as comfortable. One of the most common posture to sit in is to keep the head, neck and trunk straight with the legs either in a comfortable crossed position or for more advanced practitioners, in Lotus pose. Meditation is best practiced in a simple, uncluttered, quiet space where there will be minimal distractions. Then bring the awareness to the body and the breath and slowly ease the tension in the body. It may be difficult to adhere to a smooth rhythm of breath at the beginning but with gradual practice, it can become easier with time. There will definitely be thoughts floating through the mind every so often but the key to meditation is to observe them and not react to them. Slowly, the thoughts will start to slow down and the true form of meditation can begin to take place. There are many types of meditation that a practitioner can choose to practise. One method that might work for some may not work so well for others. It is then up to the practitioners to discover for themselves what is the best way for them to settle into meditation to be able to reap the benefits of such a relaxing and rewarding practice.

There are a plethora of benefits to meditation. For a start, meditation brings about relaxation of the body and the mind, which is a huge benefit to those who live a fast pace life. Meditation also allows one to experience who they really are, distinct from the mental turmoils that dictates everyday life. Practitioners can also start to enjoy inner peace and contentment, and perhaps find respite from the tumult of their life. Meditation can also lead to inner stability and balance as it exposes all the non beneficial habits, reflexes and decisions, brings them up the surface, and allow for attention to be given to them for further work to be done.

Meditation has been said to slow the aging process. While it could be a stretch to say that it lengthens life, however, research have shown that meditators have longer telomeres (the caps on chromosomes indicative of biological age), which reduces stress and and its effects on the body. Meditation has been touted to also benefit the cardiovascular system and immune health.

Meditation induces relaxation, which increases the compound nitric oxide that causes blood vessels to open up and subsequently, blood pressure to drop. It can be said that since one is more relaxed and happy, the body is then less susceptible to falling ill, therefore, practitioners are deem to be healthier in general.

Meditation is also associated with greater relationship satisfaction and better communication during a conflict. Mindfulness helps to boost compassion towards others and to the self and it also allows for the practitioner to feel more at ease with themselves, thus making it easier to accept people as they are and potentially for creating a more harmonious environment. Meditation also allows for more clarity and focus in undertaking everyday tasks. Research have shown that practitioners had structural changes in the part of the brain involving in monitoring focus and self-control which allowed them to stay on task for a longer period of time and enjoy their tasks more.
6.5 | TYPES OF MEDITATION

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION
Mindfulness meditation is the umbrella term for the category of techniques used to create awareness and insight by practicing focused attention, observing, and accepting all that arises without judgment. Although the origins of mindfulness meditation come from Buddhist teachings—predominantly Vipassana meditation, but also incorporates philosophies and practices from other Buddhist traditions—the style and way it’s taught is nonsectarian and appeals to people from many different religions and cultures. Its simple nature and open philosophy has made it the most popular meditation technique in the West.

CHAKRA MEDITATIONS
A chakra is an energetic center in the body, and we have seven of them, each located in a different area of the body and each associated with a different color, sound, and energetic purpose. From the practice of yoga, chakra meditations can be very powerful, especially when focusing on and connecting with one element in the physical or emotional body at a time. Many chakra meditations use sound, specific placement of hands, and visualization techniques to connect with the chakras and bring healing energy to an issue or emotion that needs attention.

YOGA NIDRA
Yoga nidra is the Sanskrit phrase for yogic sleep. As the name suggests, it’s a restful, deeply relaxing practice, and it originated from the Tantra tradition in yoga. Yoga nidra is done lying down or in a reclined, comfortable posture, and although this may look like a nap, you are fully conscious during the practice. If you’re in a class, teachers will usually recommend props, like blankets and bolsters, so you can find as much comfort and ease in the body as possible.

The meditation itself involves a step-by-step process of visualization and guided instructions that lead you into a deep state of conscious relaxation.

KUNDALINI MEDITATION
In kundalini meditation, the main idea is that through meditation, you awaken your untapped kundalini energy, located at the base of the spine. When this energy is released, it travels up the spine and leads to an experience commonly known as kundalini awakening, which ultimately leads to enlightenment. Kundalini meditations can include breathing techniques, mantras, mudras (hand placements), and chants to tap into the power of the unconscious mind and bring it forward to energize and awaken the conscious mind.

Question for creative response:
In your own words describe:
1. What happens in meditation, or
2. A profound experience that greatly expanded your awareness.
VIPASSANA MEDITATION
Vipassana is often known as insight meditation, translated to mean, “to see things as they really are.” Also a traditional Buddhist meditation practice, vipassana emphasizes awareness of the breath, tuning into the air passing in and out through the nose. Vipassana also teaches you to label thoughts and experiences as they arise, taking mental notes as you identify objects that grab your attention. Each time you identify a label in your mind, you are then encouraged to bring your awareness back to your primary object, being the breath. There are several different types of vipassana meditation that have evolved from the traditional style over the years.

DARK ROOM MEDITATION
Dark Room Meditation/Therapy for DMT production is a practice that has been used for thousands of years by sages endeavouring to unlock the great mystery to life. This is an ancient practice where an initiate secludes oneself in pitch black darkness for up to fifteen days, in complete silence. According to the Taoists and master Mantak Chia, dark room practice stimulates the production of Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) in the brain, which causes transcendent states of altered consciousness, which manifests as feelings of universal compassion and eternal oneness. There will be no sense stimulation, nobody to speak to, nothing to listen to, zero visual stimuli, only a little bit of food and water, which you will need to survive the prolonged meditation. One could also fast the whole period and get even more out of the process — as food fuels the ego and the mind and these get in the way when spiritual work needs to be done. Light and darkness are the prime factors that determine the circadian rhythms in the brain, which is responsible for inducing the body into sleep at night for much needed rest. Darkness causes the brain to synthesize the molecule melatonin, which induces sleep and different modes of consciousness, through which subtler realities are experienced in the form of dreams.
### 6.6 | SOUND / CHAKRA CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Chakra</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAM</td>
<td>Muladharma</td>
<td>Root</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAM</td>
<td>Svadhistana</td>
<td>Sacral</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAM</td>
<td>Manipura</td>
<td>Solar Plexus</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YAM</td>
<td>Anahata</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAM</td>
<td>Vissudha</td>
<td>Throat</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHM</td>
<td>Anja</td>
<td>Third Eye/Pineal</td>
<td>Purple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SILENT</td>
<td>Sahasrara</td>
<td>Crown</td>
<td>Violet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES**

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With the feelings of these pure intentions within the practitioner, chanting Om becomes a deep spiritual practice that increases the understanding of the true nature of the self. Om is the most subtle quality of nature, the most expansive and all encompassing, the vibratory source which is the name of God or the symbol for the Universe’s most fundamental principle. For this reason, Om begins all mantras.

People write; Om, Aum, and ohm among other ways. Om is understood as having a tri-fold structure and one unmanifested principal.

In Sanskrit, it is written with the sounds A(ah) U(uu) and M(mm), however the A & U in Sanskrit become the sound O(oh). The A is considered the primal sound, synonymous with the impetus of creation and the waking state. Just open your mouth and utter. That is the sound, no special manipulations required.

The U is sustained, and moves through the mouth and lips as they gradually close. It represents the play of creation, the flickering of the dream state.

As previously mentioned, these two together form O. It is interesting that it’s impossible to vocalize AU without vocalizing O, and again, impossible to vocalize OM without vocalizing U. This means that O is a combination of, or between A and U in the movement of these sounds. With this in mind then, what is A? If there are only three sounds for Om, then it would have to be O-U-M.

The A then, is simply the opening of the mouth. Remember, A requires no special articulation of the tongue or lips. It is the most basic human utterance. The A then, without any movement into O might be understood to represent the most pure expression of the divine source, an incarnation of divinity, or, a miracle. The miracle of creation.

**THE MEANINGS IN THE SYMBOL OM**

**TOP LEFT CURVE**
Deep sleep - here we spend less time but rest deeper as we increase in awareness.

**BOTTOM LEFT CURVE**
Wakefulness - Where here we spend more time and feel more calm as we increase self-knowledge.

**DOT**
Turiya - The transcendent timeless state of bliss.

**SMALL ARC**
The veil of illusion or maya.

**RIGHT CURVE**
Oscillating and flowing between wakefulness and deep sleep, reprocessing, dreams.
Finally, M, the closing of the mouth and fading of the vibrations represents moving into unconsciousness, or deep sleep. But this is not the end of the journey. To make it complete, there must be a return to the source of the creation.

This is the unmanifest principal, called Turiya, in this context. It is the state of the goal of yoga, non-dual, god realization. It is represented by the dot in the Om symbol. Is it coincidence that the last sound of the word Turiya, is A? This would make Om... (Ah)O – U – M. People write and chant Om in different ways. There are different names for the same thing.

CHANTING OM
Always chant Om with a feeling of ease. Make the three parts of sounds equal length and focus on the vibration itself which makes the vocalization.

As the breath nears its conclusion, draw the feeling of Om back from the lips and then in two directions, down, to mula bandha and up, through the crown of the head.

Focus on a silent, still light in the heart after finishing each vocalization which represents the un-manifest source of creation and true nature of the self.

DIFFERENT SYMBOLS FOR AUM

TIBETAN OM
BALINESE OM
BENGALI OM
JAIN OM

Different ways to spell om
Om Aum Ohm

The Sanskrit alphabet is not the same as the English alphabet therefore transliteration of words from one alphabet to another is not an exact science.
6.8 | CONCENTRATION TECHNIQUES

IN AN OPTIMUM SETTING, PRACTITIONERS SHOULD HAVE THE TIME TO MEDITATE AFTER A FULL PRACTICE OF ASANA AND PRANAYAMA.

Those who can be fresh and focused enough to meditate without preparatory practices may do so but will most likely still benefit from preparing with kriya and pranayama.

MULA BANDHA IN MEDITATION
Mula bandha is used to govern the energy in the body. It also works effectively as the concentration technique in meditation asana.

In each of these poses for meditation it will have a slightly different feeling. The wider the space of the perineum the more consciously you will have to focus to maintain mula bandha.

It is almost naturally occurring in the propped version of vajrasana and siddhasana with the pressure of the heel stimulating the PC muscles. Mula bandha to can be used as an ‘anchor’ to facilitate (physical) stillness.

SPATIAL AWARENESS
This technique is helpful to remember the immensity of life. In your chosen pose, begin by being aware of your own breath and the structure of your body with as much detail as you can imagine. Now, maintaining that awareness, expand to include the immediate space around you. Then expand again to include the building or larger space you are in. Expand again to include the land mass you are on. Expand to the Earth. Expand to the solar system. Expand to the galaxy. Expand to the Universe. Still have your infinitely concentrated anchor of awareness at yourself while radiated out as immensely as you can imagine.

BIJA MANTRA CHAKRA - CHAKRA BELLS
Chant, vocally or internally, the bija, or seed mantras, for the different chakra and imagine they are being struck as a bell. As they reverberate from your vocalization observe their colour manifest. Feel the qualities that each represents. Move up the chakras and repeat, “Aum”.

Meditative Breath
Focus on the following points and imagine a feeling of coolness; fresh stream on the inhalation, and filling yourself up with fresh new energy, colour blue or silver, and warmth on exhalation, expelling all toxins and negative emotions, orange or yellow colour and feeling of sunshine):

- Nose
- Throat Heart
- Belly button, Pubic Bone, Palms
- Knees
- Feet
- Up through the Spine, Third eye
6.9 | THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

WHAT IS INFINITY?

This is a little experiment to see if we can have an understanding of divine being and practice that goes beyond normal logic. It is impossible to understand logically the divine self because it is what is ‘looking’ so we can only ‘see’ what it is by tricky mirror like strategies that dissolve duality and thus the looking. Don’t take it too seriously, unless you have some kind of spontaneous awakening. But if that happens, go for it!

Typically, when considering the wholeness of the universes’ energy and complexity, the concept of infinity comes to mind. In the nature of infinity, even a portion observed within it also retains an infinite nature. This can be demonstrated in simple mathematics and sacred geometry, such as fractals and the Flower of Life.

If we take a portion of something, we can extract infinite information from it by making ever smaller divisions or dimensions within it. All of these divisions will have a logical and traceable relationship back to the original form. Creation is this way. This is why in the entity of yourself, you can look inwards to discover the true infinite nature of Self or consciousness. This is why a classical physicist will always find smaller and smaller particles if they can utilize enough energy for particle smashing machines. This is why we will also never be satisfied if we find the ‘edge of the universe’. Surely there must be something beyond that, at least in different dimensions.

This principle radiates outwards as creation, creating infinite possibilities from duplicating an original movement in new relationships. We can infer that this means there is a kind of blueprint by which existence operates. An infinite blue print. This includes human beings. So, there is this impulsive blueprint of creation, but we also have an undeniable feeling of will and choice. What is that choice? Since in this thought experiment we say that creation is infinite, that means every possible version of yourself exists in at least a state of information. Your choice is in directing your experience through this space of potentials.

Let’s try to see how we are beings of freewill and meeting the purpose of creation. In following its blueprint, the universe can’t help but potentially allow every possible variation. However, perhaps our individual consciousness and its observation is what creates this manifest universe, directing things to transform in such a way that consciousness, or the soul, recognizes itself.

In fact, it might be the drive of this existence to become ever more complex in its balance to reveal ever more subtle ways in which consciousness can forget itself, and then remember itself again. This could be the destiny. Simultaneously we can experience freewill, an infinite realm in which we can choose any direction, and destiny, moving towards spiritual realization. This is freewill merging with divine will, the divine exploration of being, the universe creating and experncing itself, through itself, for the time that we observe it as such, as a human being. They are one and the same. This is why when practicing with a balance of positive and negative aspects in the context of our individual being, we feel oneness, unbounded freedom and supreme balance, peace, and reverence for life.

So how can we practice to feel our sincere nature, our genuine connection with oneness? Make your life your practice. Observe yourself constantly and be open to act immediately on your most intimate intuitions. Bring loving kindness and awareness to your interactions, both within you and without you, and see how you will experience an increase in the flow of life throughout, and peace within. Take your practice off that mat, be active, and surrender all actions to be the will of the divine in this moment. There is no destination, simply to be ever more aware, ever more present, ever more loving of your creation. Practice.

Metaphoric Image: Be as a valve opening in a pipe of water. The more open you become, the less you hold back what is designed to flow through you, the less resistance and stress you experience, the more providing you become to others.

Suggested Media to Watch: Aby 10thdim on Youtube
RELAXATION IS A SKILL OF DISENGAGING MUSCLES, MAINTAINING A COMFORTABLE BREATHING RHYTHM AND HAVING A QUIET MIND. RELAXATION ENCOURAGES THE BODIES’ HEALING AND RESTORATION MECHANISMS AND ALLOWS US TO LOOK DEEPER INTO THE SELF.
Relaxation is the beginning of Yogic Awareness

Yoga is a practice of becoming aware of inner nature. Who are you when you can be detached from objectives in the external world? Yoga goes farther. Who, or what, are you when you are detached from any conscious intentions to control the body? Who, or what are you when you withdrawal your energy from the habits of the mind. This is savasana.
7.2 | RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

TO RELAX FULLY, ONE NEEDS TO BRING GREATER AWARENESS TO THE AREA OR PROCESS TO BE RELAXED. THE TECHNIQUES DESCRIBED HERE CAN BE PERFORMED IN THE CORPSE POSE (SAVASANA) AND SOME OF THEM IN MEDITATION ASANAS AS A CONCENTRATION TECHNIQUE.

SAVASANA – CORPSE POSE
Savasana’s main physical purpose is to learn to release habitually contracted muscles and remove accumulated stress and fatigue from the nervous system. It can be extremely beneficial to practice savasana at times besides yoga class, during the course of your day, to revitalize yourself.

The main yogic purpose is to progressively disassociate from all activity until you reach your most pure and simple form, the observer. Yoga is about stepping out of the patterns that limit the self. Many of these patterns of behaviour nest themselves in the body and as they are released by vigorous practice and savasana, they set a model by which intelligence can learn to release other more subtle behaviours.

In savasana, the practitioner may move through many levels that were previously too subtle to notice. The energetic practices of asana and pranayama regulate subtle energies, making them more easily observed when attention is drawn inwards. Understanding and even looking through these patterns lead to even deeper states of understanding about the self.

PRATYAHARA BREATHING
Pratyahara means sense withdrawal. During exhalation place the tongue behind the teeth and make a ‘shhhh’ sound. Finish each sound softly. Focus on the sound and draw your awareness inwards.

YOGA NIDRA – YOGA SLEEP
Mental awareness is moved systematically through the physical body in cycles. On each cycle, make a conscious effort to relax the part of the body you focus on. Start from the extremities and work towards your core, relaxing more every time.

TUBE BREATHING
Move awareness up through the spine into space on inhalation, and back down on exhale through the feet. Repeat.

STAR BREATHING
Focus your awareness at a point behind and below your navel. Imagine inhaling and exhaling through the centres of your palms, soles of your feet, and crown of your head to and from the navel point. Go around in a star shaped pattern. Inhale right hand to navel point, exhale right foot. Inhale right foot, exhale left foot. Inhale left foot, exhale left hand. Inhale left foot, exhale crown of the head. Inhale crown, exhale right hand. Make three rounds. Then imagine breathing in through all points to the navel, and out through all points from it again. Do three times. Make three rounds in opposite directions and finally in all directions.
HEART SOURCE FLOW - TORUS CIRCULATION
Focus your awareness to a single point at the heart centre. Imagine energy moving up through and opening like a fountain, coming out the top of your head. Imagine the energy turning down around your body like a bubble. Then comes back up underneath you, funnelling in back to the heart point. All your energy flows and balances itself. Feel still, yet eternal flow.

HYPER COMPENSATION
Hyper compensation is using one extreme to get to the other. Laying down, systematically engage one group of muscles while breathing in, then releasing as you exhale. Start from the feet and work your way up the body. Do this in as many parts as possible with a very slow build up of the contraction and release into relaxation. You will relax much deeper after finding what should relax from contracting it first. You can also try it with the entire body’s muscles simultaneously. Slowly build up contraction across the whole body and exhale release. Make each contraction phase softer than the last one.
TEACHING YOGA IS ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING THINGS A HUMAN BEING CAN DO. AS A YOGA TEACHER, YOU SHOULD CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION COMFORTABLY AND SAFELY.

IN TURN, YOU WILL ALSO EXPERIENCE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AS YOU WITNESS AND FACILITATE THIS PROCESS.
ABOUT TEACHING

Teaching is like another level of practice on the intra-personal level; an opportunity to live more expressively by the yama. Growth is accelerated for both student and teacher as they collaborate consciously in the Universe’s momentum towards complexity, beauty, and awareness.

Teaching lets you experience knowledge in new contexts as you create more connections between the topics and explore the means by which you can convey yoga as a science and art.

As a Yoga teacher, you have an incredible opportunity. You work at the forefront of the evolution of human consciousness, spiritual awareness, holistic health, and compassion. This is what teaching yoga is all about.

We all know how popular yoga is now, and we can rest well assured it will continue to grow as a spiritual beacon, cultural innovator, and profitable venture.

As more and more yoga teacher trainings commence and the number of teachers increases it will become more important to distinguish yourself as a teacher with depth and character if you are planning for this to be your career. This means you have to be yourself and present all the facets of yoga practice, lifestyle, and philosophy which you feel most inclined towards.

Teach with passion, honesty, and generosity. Especially generosity. Give attention to your students and invest yourself in their development. This is what makes you a successful teacher and students will want to continue to learn from you. Help people leaving your class to feel good about themselves, more in tune with what they want to do with life, and more relaxed in all situations. The more you open your heart to be a generous teacher, the more profoundly you can provide this to your students.
8.2 PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

As a yoga teacher you are a leader, a guide, a person of authority whom they can trust. Honour those roles every time you step into a room. Teach with authority, teach with compassion and teach with an integrity to your beliefs and knowledge.

LEADING
Leading is showing people the best way to get somewhere desirable. It is setting an example that others can understand and use or at least want to. Your best quality of a leader is to inspire and bring out the best qualities in people. By practicing yoga steadfastly, people will notice your development and be drawn towards you, sensing how connected and energized you are. Nurture your health, pursue your interests passionately, and keep learning. A yoga teacher can be a leader in many ways. It might be the sheer enthusiasm, honesty, abundant energy, peacefulness, ability in asana, communication skills, community involvement, or alternative life style you saw in a teacher that led you to want to be a yoga teacher too.

RAPPORT
Rapport is when two or more people have a trusting connection through their actions or expressions. You can first establish rapport with people by making yourself approachable, amiable, and non-threatening. Use an open mouth smile with people. Do not be dominating or show off.

Rapport can be further established by subtly mirroring postures during conversation, using similarly excited tone of voice, common expressions, and expressing shared interests. While teaching asana you should keep this idea in mind. The whole asana class is a form of rapport. Students that have rapport with you will follow the instruction more easily and generate a strong energy in the classroom. When everyone is focused on the same thing, that too is yoga.

Choose asana or techniques that everyone can do or at least try. You will keep rapport and encourage development in your students.

CONGRUENCY
Teach what you live. Be a living example of what you are talking about. This does not mean you have to be a perfect yogi or yogini. You will be teaching yoga through your own life experiences at times.

Talk about the aspects of yoga practice that you are using or are interested. It is a good method to tell stories to your students about your own life experiences that may have challenged you and how yoga helped. Doing this gives students a reference to understand where you have come from and who you are as a result.

Yama and niyama are often inherent in these kinds of stories. Having the students consider these ideas sets the right attitude for practice. Yama and niyama are universal and remind us of our common humanity. Demonstrate as much congruency as possible so students will have confidence and be further open to accelerated exploration.

SUGGESTION
A suggestion is in essence a command that is either directly given or an invitation to a possible experience. The yoga teacher’s class is indeed nothing but suggestions and you can tell your students this, that the only exercise they are required to practice is being present. A suggestion is denoted by a verb, something to do, or, to feel.

Suggestions operate on many levels. At the first level, it is the actual exercises to be done. Then if there is time within the exercise, suggest sensations, ‘feel’, this or that physicality of the exercise. Finally you can suggest transformations, realizations, and new possibilities as results.

“With your next inhale step your right foot back into the high lunge position, raise the arms.

Exhale press equally forwards and backwards through your feet. Steady the hips and lift your heart. Practicing yoga will make you feel alive!”
Help your students discover and create new and better relationships with themselves and their external world through your suggestions. Yoga often seems only a lesson on physical poses and breathing but can be much, much more. You can start with vague suggestions in the beginning of the class such as: “...each time you practice you can discover yourself in a new way...”

Subtle suggestions are more easily accepted. In this example, you “can” discover yourself in a new way. This suggestion doesn’t imply what, or even that they will discover something, but, it sets the stage for awareness and curiosity. More powerful suggestions can come later, such as,

“Yoga practice might give you the confidence or faith to change your life for the better”.

QUESTION EVERYTHING

Questioning is a very useful tool for inward observation, which is usually the way we describe approaching self. The kinds of questions to use are typical of satsang (knowledge sharing forums), where people gather, usually with a guru to talk or sing about the experience of coming to peace and self-awareness. The guru usually asks questions such as... "Who is experiencing this?" How do you know you’re thinking what you’re thinking? What is the feeling of not knowing who you are?

NOTES
THIS IS THE MANTRA FROM THE UPAISHADS. IT IS USUALLY RECITED BEFORE THE START OF CLASS. IT IS AN INVOCATION FOR THE NOURISHMENT AND PROTECTION OF THE TEACHER AND STUDENT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit Type</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ऊं सहना ववतु</td>
<td>Aum sahanau vavatu</td>
<td>Aum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सहनौ भुन ु</td>
<td>Sahanau bhunaktu</td>
<td>May we together be protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>सहृविय म् करवावह</td>
<td>Saha veeryam karavahai</td>
<td>May together we be nourished.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>तेजि ना वधीतम् अ ु</td>
<td>Tejasvi navatitam astu</td>
<td>May we have the capacity to study and understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मा विद विशावहै</td>
<td>Ma vid vishavahai</td>
<td>May our study be brilliant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ऊं शांति शांति शांति</td>
<td>Aum Shanti shanti shanti</td>
<td>May we not argue, Aum peace peace peace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.4 | VOICE

THE TONE AND QUALITY IN A HUMAN VOICE CARRIES A REMARKABLE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION. A LISTENER GETS JUST AS MUCH MEANING FROM THE TONE OF YOUR VOICE THAN THE WORDS. WHEN YOU ARE TEACHING, THE WAY TO EXPRESS YOUR WORDS WILL INFLUENCE HOW YOUR STUDENTS INTERPRET YOUR WORDS.

A voice that is clear, easily understood and confident, inspires trust and motivates your students. People find it easier to follow a voice which is dynamic and having a range of tones and paces, and one that conveys emotion and excitement.

Some people naturally have a loud, clear spoken voice, some people may have quiet, meek voices; this depends on many things, such as cultural background, a person’s current state of mind, or and physical reasons. Plus many more, in any case, there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ voice.

As a teacher you will need to develop a loud audible voice that can fill a room or open space. This takes time, but it does not take very long.

The three main components you should focus on are, breathing, projection and confidence. When we say confidence we are not talking about ego, we are talking about, believing in yourself, knowing that you know what you are talking about, in other words; believing in yourself, regardless of any persons’ response to you.

PROJECTION
Projection is the adequate volume and clarity of a speaker’s voice that allows an entire audience to hear you clearly regardless of their position in the space you are in.

Projection merits respect to the speaker as it conveys power and enthusiasm. Speaking volume comes from the pressure made by deep movements of the diaphragm which is also modified by relaxation of the neck and chest, contraction of the vocal chords, openness of the mouth, and bandha. Your volume should be determined by the size of your class. Your range should be that everyone can still hear your ‘relaxing’ tone and as well as your ‘exciting’ tone, the volume should be somewhat the same. Projecting

Personal exercise: Observation

Observe a person speaking to you. Do they seem sincere? Does the tone in their voice match what they are talking about? Do they seem sincere? What mood do you think they are in? Observe the difference between a worker, such as a waiter/waitress, a person from a call centre, someone you don’t know, your best friend, a colleague.
your voice means that you can speak at loud volume without straining or damaging your vocal chords.

When you are speaking quietly, or to a very large class, open your mouth fully for the best projection. Use clear articulation by speaking at a moderate pace and having mindfulness in the movements of your mouth and tongue. This puts more distinction to your voice and makes your speaking more interesting to listen to.

**PACE AND RHYTHM**

- The pace at which you speak should be defined by the type of class you are teaching. You will need to speak at a pace that allows you to breathe properly, which in effect will allow you to project your voice in the correct manner.

- You do not need to speak constantly for the entire class, in fact, you probably shouldn’t. After each sentence you should have enough time to take at least one partially deep breath.

Speak in regular, consistent intervals. Eg: Sentence - stop - take a breath. Sentence - stop - take a breath. A metronome can be used to practice this technique. This technique can create a rhythm and pace for your students to follow. You can develop different rhythms and pace to suit different postures, or sets of postures, for example:

  - A simple rhythm would have equal pauses between words and sentences.

  - A complex rhythm might draw some words longer and have irregular pauses that do however match the actions in the practice.

**BASIC PRINCIPALS OF TEACHING**

Typically, with each asana (or a class in its entirety), you will speak more in the beginning, and less towards the end, and to complete the class, observe silence.

1. Give the fundamental information to entering the anatomical position of the asana first.
2. Give students quiet time to be still in the pose without any further directions, this will allow them to observe the sensations of their body, which will help them understand the musculo-skeletal characteristics of the asana.
3. You might at times suggest what muscles to feel.
4. Add commentary for fine tuning alignment, breath, focus, etc.

This approach matches the physical dynamic of a typical yoga practice; starting with the physical movement and then focusing inwards, to the mental aspect.

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**Personal exercise: Projection**

Target Projection: Practice projecting speaking with your fellow trainees. If you are close by talk just loud enough to be heard. When addressing the entire class and let your voice radiate. Pick somebody out from a distance and project your voice directly towards them. While teaching you may need to quickly change between modes of voice, ie; loud audible without straining and soft and audible.

Aum: Chant Aum and observe the feeling in your vocal chords, tongue, and mouth playing with volume and projection. Start with the sound of “O” then “U” and finally “M”.

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EMPHASIS AND INFLECTION

Emphasis and inflection are important vocal techniques in that they make your voice interesting for your audience, and also aid with the understanding of the instruction. Emphasis and inflection also puts more information into what you want your students to do and feel. Simply by saying some words with emphasis, either softer or louder, or raising or lowering your pitch, offers a more immersive practice.

VOICE MODALITIES

Here are some other ways you can speak. These are just general ideas. You may think of others or choose not to use some of these but just be aware of the many ways you can deliver your voice and teaching:

Informative
Speak at a slighter quicker pace, delivering information about things like anatomy, benefits of practices, philosophy etc., accenting on your points.

Hypnotic
Speak progressively slower, and slightly lower pitched, with longer pauses between key ideas. Consider speaking around the pace of your students’ heart beat.

Encouraging
Sometimes people just need encouragement. Speak in a slightly higher pitch, repeating key words with consistency or raising intensity. If you need to be encouraging, remember to smile!

Humorous
Let your voice go a little. You don’t need to don’t control it word by word. Sometimes a funny mood hits you and you can share it with your class. It might be stories, humorous observation, or playful commands. Your pitch might go very high or very low or change unexpectedly.

Average healthy individuals resting heart rate beats at about 60 beats per minute. You can practice speaking with a metronome or even use one while you lead class for this and giving the students more awareness of breath duration.

Conversational
Talk in your normal speaking voice, as you would with close friends. Tell stories about yourself or yoga experiences.

Here is a rather simple example of how emphasis changes meaning. Read the following sentences emphasizing the underlined word.

I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (Someone else said it.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (Strong denial of having said it.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (I implied or suspected that she did.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (Someone else stole it.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (She did something else with it.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (She stole someone else’s pen.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (She stole one of another color.)
I didn’t say Minni stole my blue pen. (She stole something else blue.)

When teaching, express through the words to convey the feeling you want the students to experience.
MAKE A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR STUDENTS THAT GOES BEYOND GIVING INSTRUCTIONS. EXTEND YOUR FRIENDSHIP AND KNOWLEDGE TO EACH PERSON INDIVIDUALLY WHenever YOU CAN. BE MINDFUL OF THEIR RECEPTIVITY AND RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

Students can benefit greatly from your trust and friendship. They will feel more comfortable approaching you about the experiences of their practice and to ask questions or anything else with which they might need help. These developments are where the really interesting work of teaching yoga lays, in uniting and exploring the frontier.

ASSESSING YOUR STUDENTS
Be attentive to assessing the students practice physically, mentally, and emotionally. Then you can easily offer the best practice for the students' needs. This kind of awareness is the essence of private or small class sessions with students who are looking to refine their practice or heal themselves. Most teachers start off just focusing on keeping the flow of a class together but there is no reason you can’t quickly take off to do some real work and interact with your students. Keenly observe your students to get the knowledge for how to act as their best teacher.

FEEDBACK
The simplest way to begin to interact more with your students is to just give feedback about their practice! Give students personal instruction if you see incorrect practice. Tell them when they are doing something especially right so they remember it from your encouraging response, “Just like that, good!” Personal feedback is best when you are close by, perhaps while assisting. If you are farther away but notice something that needs to be verbalized to them, prompt them by saying their name first, projected quietly but directly to them. Speak calmly and encouragingly. You can also give encouraging generalized feedback to the whole class just by saying “good” or “beautiful”.

ADAPTING TO NEEDS AND GETTING THE BASICS INGRAINED
Studio yoga classes are often separated into levels but you will always have a variety within a class. Of course, there is no separation in yoga! So you must also use assessment to give your students the right asana, or modified variations to suit individuals. Here are some basic things you can look for to judge whether other asana are accessible. This will be covered more thoroughly in the anatomy module.

PHYSICAL ADJUSTMENTS AND ASSISTING
This kind of feedback is much more powerful and can really show you are invested in the students’ developing practice. Adjustments are using touch to deepen stretches or correct alignment. Assists are more subtle ways to provide insight or aid stability. There are many ways to provide adjustments and assists. You will learn specific techniques throughout the course but use these general ideas and you’ll discover more on your own too.
Whenever you come to adjust or assist be clear in your own mind, relaxed in your own body, and have good intentions for your students. If you are working with large classes be impartial and objective, giving your help to the students most in need or evenly throughout the student body.

Kinesthetic Reference
This assisting technique just is simply a light touch to a place that will give the student a good reference as to which direction to move their body or appendage.

The light touch will give you enough sensory feedback to sense the physical range of motion of the student, importantly, this will aid the student to know which direction to move their body, and move safely within their range of motion.

Security
This kind of assist is used mostly in balancing poses, inversions, and advanced movements. You are there to make your student feel safe to perform the asana without fear of injury. This may mean helping someone with handstand or holding a student’s lower back as they drop back to Wheel.

Alignment adjust
If kinesthetic reference doesn’t correct alignment begin to use your hands to direct their body further. You might only need to lightly trace a direction or you might actually pull or push them into the better alignment. Whatever you do make sure they are safe and grounded and comfortable with your touch. Once you’ve made the adjustment stay with them for a few seconds of kinesthetic reference and to make sure they can maintain the alignment you’ve suggested.

Stretch assist
For good stretch adjustments know your students breath cycle. You may feel it with your hands, hear it, or see it with your eyes. Be focused and tune in to it. You may also encourage their breath and rhythm by saying “inhale” when they inhale, counting, and saying “exhale” when they exhale. In some poses you will use one part of your body to steady theirs and another to apply push.

Example: In prasarita padotanasana, place one hand squarely on to their sacrum or back and pressing down to keep them “in their feet” while the other hand deepens the forward fold on their back or arms if they are extended with fingers together.

Savasana adjustment
This is a method for helping to induce deep relaxation in shavasana. You can use it in parts or in whole and discover other techniques for the same purpose. Give the students a minute or so before giving this adjustment and explain that you will offer the shavasana adjustment so they are not startled when receiving it. Start with a very light touch of your fingers just below the knees, then lightly, trace lines down to their ankles. Firmly grasp their ankles and pick up their legs. As you do so widen them if
Common Observations

HAMSTRINGS/BACK
If your student can't touch the ground without bending their knees in the following poses; Half Moon, Standing split, Parsvatonasana etc., have them use blocks. Warrior III can have bent knee, or life the angle of the upper body and lifted leg higher.

PLANK
If the students plank pose is 'droopy' fix it, or if they can't hold for longer than 20 seconds keep coming back to it to develop their core stability.

BACK BENDS
You can assess back bending from how someone does cobra, locust, and bow poses. They are relatively safe and good for developing back strength. Teach them how to properly come into cobra rolling the shoulders back, and lifting up sequentially through the vertebrae from the lower back like doing the flat back movement.

SHOULDER AND HIP TIGHTNESS
If you have a student with really tight hips and shoulders keep working on it. Gomukhasana is a great asana for working on both. Use long holds applying pressure to the thighs in bound angle pose.

POOR MOBILITY AND VERY STIFF
Modify things. Use props. Try not to move from significantly different positions quickly. For example Sun Salutation A is too intense for people with extreme stiffness. The vinyasa of flat back, lowering to the ground on knees or to low push up, then up dog, and down dog... is just too much. Just go from flat back to down dog.

Deeper relationships
It’s not uncommon for students to have a favourite teacher. If you become someone’s favourite, feel honoured! Be mindful that your adoring students don’t take you too seriously, or yourself for that matter. Remind them that you are just as human as they are.

Sometimes students become closer with fellow students or even their teacher, as friends or lovers. Generally, this is fine as long as behaviour is respectful of other students during practice or class time. If your friend or lover is taking your class it’s okay to still feel your normal relationship with them but keep sight of your purpose and serve the entire class.

KINESTHETIC REFERENCE
(light touch) is the safest form of physical adjustment.
8.6  TEACHING A YOGA CLASS

In a typical class you want to provide a well-rounded practice. Whatever style of class you are teaching, you should base it on a well-formulated sequence that fulfills the criteria of a well-rounded practice. When you are confident that you have fulfilled those requirements then add your personal touch.

BEFORE YOUR CLASS
Just like practice, there are many things you can do to prepare yourself. Besides the ideas below, you should be well rested, hydrated, and prepared to put any negative emotional issues to the side.

If this is not possible yet, you still have to teach a class, consider looking at your issue with yogic philosophy in mind and weave this experience into your class.

Self practice
When it’s possible and practical, practicing right before your class is a great way to be in the state for bringing your students into a good practice. You will already be warmed up and you will be warmed up enough to demonstrate safely and correctly.

Stimulate Vishuddha Chakra
Open the throat chakra, your communication and expression awareness. Singing is a great way to do this. And it’s a lot of fun to sing some of your favourite songs on the way to teach to get pumped up. Consider using something uplifting, that you can sing with emotion and an open throat. Or you can also just hum or talk.

Meet your students
Be at the studio or practice space a little earlier so there is time to talk and interact with your students. By interacting with your students prior to class you might learn a little something about them that can help you understand their practice a little better.

IN YOUR CLASS
Just like in your own practice you should take care of yourself. Bring some water. Sometimes all the talking and ujjayi breathing can create dryness in the throat and palate. It will help keep your voice clear and pleasant. Teach at a pace and level you are comfortable with. Teach what you know in your heart. Teach what you feel in the moment.

DEMONSTRATION
Describe the technique, demonstrate the technique, then encourage your students to try. If you have decided to add an unusual or difficult posture to your sequence then new students particularly should be encouraged to watch you demonstrate first.

You can also use your experienced students as an example to point out alignment for postures that might be challenging for you, or your range of joint motion does not allow you to demonstrate the posture to its full potential. If you teach a sequence that involves turning to face a different direction you should go demonstrate on that side of the room. You can also consider getting “in rank” amongst the students and performing asana right along with them so they can get a close look at the form and feel your enthusiasm. They may also even be able to hear your breathing.

Although all physical forms of yoga are hatha yoga, there are many different styles of, all of which have predefined sequences and order of postures. That’s part of what makes them unique. Understand why they are structured in the way that they are and apply those formulas to your own class.
SEQUENCING
Many beginning teachers focus a lot on sequencing and may think they need to fit in a lot of poses to make a successful class, which is not necessarily the case. Clever sequencing can provide insightful ways to experience yoga, especially when combined with even more clever teaching that elicits some essence from the poses and yokes it with an intended purpose. Clever sequence choices are ones that follow the basics of hatha yoga movements first and foremost. Once the sequence is balanced then it may be possible to add variations and the like to give your class a sense of being more ‘dynamic’. If you feel the need to create new and more ‘dynamic’ sequences, you should always practice your sequences repeatedly before teaching them so you understand how they work; deciding what is effective and safe, and what isn’t. In other words, fine tune your sequences before imparting them on your students.

UNDERSTAND PRANA (ENERGY)
Prana (energy) moves in certain directions within each asana. In many cases the inhale and exhale are specific to the movement. The most typical, or common, of these movements are:

Inhale to; lift the torso from forward bending, extend the spine, raise the arms, open the arms, separate the legs, straighten a leg, untwist, raise from child pose, flat back, lift into backbends, come out of a stretch. Uddiyana bandha would apply.

Exhale to; lower the torso, twist the body, cross the arms or legs, place the hands down, lift the legs bent or straight, lift to inversions, lower the arms, deepen a stretch. Mula bandha would apply.

If there is no breathing technique specifically attached to the posture or movement then the breath should be assumed to be natural.

SEQUENCING STRUCTURES
Clever sequencing is not only in the relation of the ‘this pose to that pose’ but also in the overall structure of your class considering rhythms, pace changes, intensities, and shifts in fundamentally different types of Asana.

Slow Rev
Using a standing vinyasa sequence on both sides. Then do it again twice as slow. Then do it again as slow as possible. Then again holding each position for 5 breath cycles.

Mirror (left and right)
This is how Ashtanga vinyasa works. Do the pose on one side then, and then in as few breaths and movements as possible switch to the other side, mirror the posture.

All one Side
Create an extremely long series of poses all on one side of the body. Come back to a symmetrical resting position such as Downward Facing Dog or Mountain Pose and hold for at least 5 breath cycles. Repeat on the other side.

Preparation Tips
PREPARATION AND PRACTICING.
The more you prepare for your class the easier it will be to teach and observe your students:
Follow standard structures (balanced sequencing) for the style of class you plan to teach.
Write down your sequences and practice them.
Write down or record your instructions and then practice your own class.
Standing to Floor to Standing Again
These are some fun sequences. Here’s an example:


Same Plane
Do a sequence in one plane of movement. For example: Low Lunge – Drop Knee – Hanuman – Standing Split.
Or

The Four Cardinal Directions
Use sequences that turn to face each direction. Prasarita Padottanasana and squats and their variations are good for the ‘sides’ of the mat. Do sun salutes into standing asana to begin.

When you are creating your own sequences, especially as a new teacher, practice them at least a few times first and make sure you are confident in sound techniques and desired results.

MOVING AROUND THE ROOM
Often times the teacher will be at the front of the room before the class, demonstrating and projecting their voice. This is natural but you should also take every advantage you can to move around the room to spread your energy and focus to the students. You will be more apt to assist and give adjustments, make observations, learn, incite humorous interactions, and the movement of your voice around the room also makes it a more immersive experience and keeps students ‘on their toes’ when they feel the teacher may be nearby and observing. While doing vinyasa and long asana sequences you can also position yourself in the same or mirror position within the room for every repetition, putting the students into a trance from the consistency in the pattern of their auditory experience.

THEMES
If you’ve ever attended a yoga workshop you will know there are themes. Themes could be the types of practice detailed earlier in the book, specific styles, certain types of asana such as back bends, practices such as pranayama, or be about certain aspects of yoga philosophy like chakras, yamas and niyamas.

YOGA ACCESSORIES
Various items can put some extra magic into your classes. Many studios have bells or singing bowls that you can use for starting classes, or bringing people up from savasana. The metronome we mentioned earlier is a great way for keeping in time and aware of breath duration and patterns. Other less common accessories but certainly powerful nonetheless require a kind of specialized interest. Crystals can be utilized for cleansing or aligning energies of the practice space and yourself. You might also keep other tokens for this purpose like mantra beads or similar trinkets and artifacts. Using herbal fragrances adds a distinctive new element to the practice space that students will remember favourably. As scent is one of the most primal senses it can invoke a very strong memory of your classes. Consider having one scent to use as your signature. Finally, if you have your own practice space or studio, consider decorating with images of sacred geometry.

SACRED GEOMETRY
To those who feel stimulated by the beauty of archetypal forms you should consider looking into sacred geometry for your own inspiration and for decorating your space. Sacred geometries are forms that are fundamental in blueprint of creation.

Let’s look at one more amazing connection, the fractal nature of Aum. A fractal is a self-repeating and infinitely complex pattern generated by a mathematical formula. Aum is the infinitely complex vibration of existence.
How do yoga teachers decide what they are going to teach? Ask some during the course! Classes can be taught spontaneously, or from precise sequencing and scripts. Before you teach a class you should have at least a general plan for how your class will go and what you want to accomplish.

If you teach many classes per day you can work on refining your sequences towards a more natural flow with better results in each class. Always observe enough to adapt your plan however. Teach what is effective and important for your students, not just what you want.

The Structure
A good class will have a similar structure to good music. There is an intro, a recurring theme or relatable parts that have dynamic build ups leading to climaxes. Then the wind down and an outro movement. This is a yoga practice. You explore the physical body and bring it to a peak. You explore the energetic body and bring it to a high frequency. You explore the space of the mind and cleanse it by meditation, that wonderful feeling after a good song. Now, the effects of the practice, that song that continues to play inside of you even after its gone, and transforms you. Take yourself from body to bliss.

This is just a basic structure. There are infinite possibilities but this is simple, easy to remember and apply, and extremely affective.

Opening the class
Make some small talk, ask people if they have things they want to work on, or give them a brief introduction to today’s themes and practices.

Centering
Create a short and powerful ritual for intentions and prayers followed by silence for everyone to focus and prepare for practice. Chant Aum.

Warm up
Make them sweat or at least get flushed and awake. Use simple vinyasa, sun salutations, and low intensity static poses.

Increasing intensity
Keep building up heat and start to give some challenges. Use classic standing poses, and other more challenging asana depending on your students.

High intensity peak
This portion of the class may repeat several times, hitting a peak, decreasing, increasing, and peaking again. It depends on how much time you have, and the energy of your students, and your intentions for the class.
Decreasing Intensity
Once you’ve hit your last peak start to wind down, eventually coming to hold in mountain pose or down dog for a little while. Enter the seated and laying practice.

Low intensity
Use longer holds in forward folds, supine twists, happy baby, or cooling poses like shoulder stand series.

Relaxation
The last few poses should naturally lead into savasana. A passive supine twist on both sides is good last stretch. Talk gently, bring attention to releasing effort, stillness, and peacefulness. Use yoga nidra.

Closing the class
Once everyone is seated up and has become still, you can close the class. Use this time to talk about spiritual awareness, love, peacefulness, gratitude, power of intention etc. Or just allow a moment of silence for the students to soak in their practice. Chanting Aum, followed by an affirmation, or the simple “namaste” is a powerful way to conclude the practice. If you use an affirmation, let it come from your heart. “Recognize the divine within you and see it as equal and the same with all beings, namaste.” You can usually tell if it was a good practice if no one is in a hurry to get up and that when they do they are smiling or look immersed in peacefulness. Once they are moving about ask if there are any questions or thoughts to be shared. Express your gratitude for the presence of the students. Remain seated and calm until all the students are up and leaving. This will give anyone who has a more personal question to approach you in comfort. These small conversations after class can be extremely helpful to you and your student. If you are working with an individual in a private session provide any other insights or suggestions that might aid their practice.

Questions for discussion:
What is a successful class? How do you know when you’ve taught one? What are the signs?

Extra Concept for Thought:
WHO IS THE REAL TEACHER?
Since there can be no teacher without students the real ‘teacher’ is actually that which expands consciousness. Quantum physics has proven that observing a phenomenon changes its behaviour. In this way, all of creation can be our teacher or our student. This idea opens up the possibility that we can learn at anytime, from anything. Continue to be grateful for your teachers however!
INTERESTED IN CHANGING THE WORLD?

Start your business today!

Viksa Yoga Vision:

WE CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE PEOPLE ARE PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY NOURISHED, WHERE THEY ARE GIVEN THE KNOWLEDGE TO BECOME MORE MINDFUL, CONSCIOUS BEINGS, TO INSPIRE AND EMPOWER THEM TO CREATE A HAPPIER, HEALTHIER LIFE FOR THEMSELVES AND OTHERS.
9.1 | VIKASA MISSION AND CORE VALUES

MISSION

To be a globally recognized brand for inspiring and empowering people all around the world to expand their consciousness by providing world-class yoga retreats, yoga teacher trainings, workshops, tools for personal growth and well-being and an environment for transformation and self-realization. Our true mission is to help individuals grow personally, and ultimately to contribute to the society and well-being of our planet.

VALUES

Integrity
Positivity
Mutual Respect
Passion
Gratitude

WE CAN DO IT BETTER TOGETHER

Liquid Capital Required $25,000
Net Worth Required $0
Investment $50,000 - $500,000
Franchise Fee $25,000
Royalty 5.0%
Units in Operation 3
Founded 2011
Franchising Since 2012

ASK YOURSELF 3 QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE

1. What do I want to experience?
2. How will I evolve?
3. How can I contribute?

Price estimates as of November 1, 2016. Estimates may be subject to change.
FULL FRANCHISE INFORMATION

Vikasa Yoga is more than yoga education and training company, it is a lifestyle company with 3 studio locations in Thailand, Malaysia and Japan (Flagship studio in Thailand). The studios are zen spaces that unite yogis and like-minded seekers of truth from across the globe to help spread the evolution of consciousness and the company’s core values. Vikasa is known for high standards in yoga instruction and everything else that we do, from food to content production to interior and graphic designs.

VIKASA YOGA FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES – HISTORY

Vikasa Yoga was founded by Kosta Miachin, who has been behind it since 2011 in Samui, Thailand, where it is based today. Vikasa Yoga has since become one of the largest and well known yoga retreats in the South East Asia and would like to expand it’s horizons, with a goal of growing to 108 studios by 2022.

The company has grown to offer yoga teacher training, personalized programs, organic healthy food and a line of yoga merchandise and lifestyle products.

GIVING BACK

Besides business, Kosta’s personal lifetime mission is to provide conscious education to everyone around the world, and change as many lives as possible, ultimately contributing to the well being of our planet by elevating people’s consciousness and contributing to the evolution of mankind. This will be done not only through teachings of yoga and adaptation of healthy sustainable life style, but also through organic farming projects, sustainable energy usage, reforestation projects and so on. The biggest mission is the contribution to the society and planet.

So if you want to change the world too, join the Vikasa Family and help to make the world a better place.

9.3 | CONTACT

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT VIKASA FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES:

Contact: Kosta Miachin
Email: growth@vikasa.com

Or arrange for a personal consultation with Kosta during your visit to Vikasa Yoga Retreat, Kho Samui, Thailand.
The following books are essential readings for all modern yoga teachers. Many of the concepts and principles are applied at Vikasa Yoga teacher training and we highly recommend you include these in your library.

**HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA** is one of the most significant references for modern yoga teachers and should have a place in every yoga teachers’ library.
*Author:* Swami Mukdibodhananda

**ASANA PRANAYAMA MUDRA BANDHA** Many of the concepts taught at Vikasa are inspired by this book. You will find this is an expansion on much of the information contained in this manual.
*Author:* Swami Satyananda Saraswati

**PRANAYAMA ITS PHILOSOPHIES AND PRACTICE** Pranayama is an essential element of all yoga practices. This is a light but concise reference on the principals and practices of pranayama. Many of the pranayama concepts taught at Vikasa are inspired by this book.
*Author:* Swami Ramdev

**KEY POSES OF YOGA** This book offers a scientific approach to understanding the practice of hatha yoga. This reference is filled with 3D illustrations of major muscles, tendons, and ligaments, and descriptions of the practice and benefits of hatha yoga.
*Author:* Ray Long MD FRCSC

**KEY POSES OF YOGA** Specific anatomical and physiological descriptions highlight the agonist, antagonist, and synergist muscles that come into play with each pose. This volume describes the key muscles of hatha yoga and how they are utilized.
*Author:* Ray Long MD FRCSC

**NOTES**
Happiness is a Choice