

**THE ESSENCE OF YOGA: YOGA BASICS
WEEK 3**

I. HOW DO YOU APPROACH LIFE? HOW DO YOU APPROACH ASANA?

A. How do you approach life? How do you approach yoga?

Food for thought: Are you competitive or easily intimidated? Are you tenacious or do you give up easily? Are you a perfectionist or more easily satisfied? Are you self-critical or self-accepting? How does this affect how you approach yoga? What can you learn about yourself?

B. The right use of energy: Balancing will and surrender

These two concepts - will or effort, called *abhyasa*, and surrender or non-attachment, called *vairagya* - are key concepts in the yoga tradition. The two concepts function at a number of levels: the physical (relaxation vs. tension), the energetic (balancing the flow of the breath, using the breath to achieve physical and energetic balance in the pose), and the mental and emotional (striving to achieve vs. acceptance of what is). Achieving a balance between will and surrender in each pose is key to achieving poses that are "steady and comfortable" even if apparently strenuous!

C. Using the breath to balance energy

In general, lengthening the inhale brings energy into the body, while lengthening the exhale releases energy from the body. Inhale energy into the pose, but soften into the pose on the exhale, seeking the balance between will and surrender. Finding the lines of energy in a pose while help to improve your alignment.

II. KAKI PRANAYAMA VARIATION: BEAK BREATH TO LENGTHEN EXHALATION

instructions: Inhale naturally through the nose. Then, form a beak with the mouth, as if you were blowing through a straw, and exhale, completely emptying the lungs.

general benefits: Although it is counterintuitive, a more complete exhalation will automatically deepen your inhalations. Luxuriating in long and complete exhalations assures the body that all is well, so by consciously lengthening the exhalation we encourage our bodies to relax even in tense situations.

III. "HA" BREATH: Relaxing or energizing.

Notice the effects of lengthening the inhale vs. lengthening the exhale.

"HA" breath to relax:

instructions: Inhale deeply through the nose. Exhale gently through the mouth saying "haaaaaaa" until the lungs are completely empty. Try it with Adhi mudra!

general benefits: This breath releases stress and tension from the body

"HA" breath to energize:

instructions: Inhale deeply. Exhale quickly and sharply while exclaiming "Ha!".
Combine it with movement!

General benefits: Activates the Hara center, the power center just below the navel, and brings energy into the body.

IV. BHAIRAVA MUDRA / SPONTANEOUS BLISS

instructions: Rest the cupped left hand onto your lap. Rest the cupped right hand into the left hand. Allow the shoulders to relax. Downward and allow the weight of your entire being to rest down into the earth.

benefits: This mudra invokes the spirit of effortless surrender and bliss, the essence of meditation, It induces profound calm and peace.

V. BENEFITS OF TWISTS AND INVERSIONS

TWISTS: Twists extend and align the spine. They increase circulation of blood in the spine, maintain flexibility of the spine, and help prevent back strain and sciatica. They slim the hips and waistline. They balance the nervous system. They stimulate peristalsis, improve digestion and help relieve constipation.

Careful! Be careful or avoid if you have herniated discs or sacroiliac problems.

INVERSIONS: Inversions strengthen arm, shoulder and back muscles, increase lymphatic circulation, help the veins return blood to the heart, and nourish the scalp and hair roots.

Careful! If you have osteoporosis, avoid pressure on the front of the cervical spine in bridge and shoulderstand. Do not lower your head below the heart if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, a heart condition, detached retina, weak eye capillaries or any inflammation of the eyes or ears.

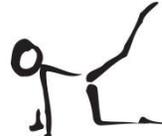
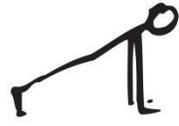
VI> ASANA

1. Pigeon
2. Locust
3. Revolved Side Angle
4. Triangle
5. Warrior 3
6. Wide Legged Forward Fold, seated and standing
7. Bridge

VI. HOMEWORK

- Check your posture when standing, for example, while waiting to check out at the supermarket.
- Scan your body and consciously relax the areas of tension.
- Check your breath. Find one or two things that happen regularly during the day that will remind you to check your breath. Remember to fill your lungs completely with 3 part yogic breathing!
- Take a meditation break. (Yoga Journal, August 2011)
 - **Stillness:** Stand more firmly on your feet or sit and settle into your buttocks and hips. Breathe deeply.
 - **Relaxation:** Soften your facial muscles: forehead, eyes, mouth, lips, and tongue. Breathe deeply.
 - **Equipose:** Free your hands and rest them by your sides or place them gently on your lap. Breathe deeply.
 - **Informal meditation:** Notice how it feels to be present with yourself, slowing down and observing. You are engaging with the first steps of meditation, which you can enjoy anywhere, anytime.
- Stretch every day. Then, practice a pose ,, or two!

 you•go•yoga	THE ESSENCE OF YOGA: YOGA BASICS week 3 practice
WARM UPS	Comfortable Cross Legged Position → Sun Breaths w/ Kaki Pranayama Seated Twist (tip! Remember to balance will and surrender.) neck and shoulder release Seated Cat / Cow Rock the Baby (Baby Cradle) Table Top → Tiger Lunges Sun bird (challenge! Grab your foot!)
ASANA	Pigeon Hip Circles → Child's Pose → Rag Doll HA breath w/ sharp exhale Mountain Pose Plank Pose Locust Table Top → Hip Circles → Puppy Stretch Downward Facing Dog Warrior 1 (r) Downward Facing Dog Warrior 1 (l) Warrior 3 5 Pointed Star Wide Legged Standing Forward Fold Warrior 2 → Side Angle → Revolved Side Angle → Triangle (r) Goddess Warrior 2 → Side Angle → Revolved Side Angle → Triangle (l) Squat Seated Wide Legged Forward Fold Relaxed Forward Fold Bridge
COOLDOWN	HA breath w/ slow exhale Seated Barrel Roll Forward Bend and to the sides, back Knees to Chest
RELAXATION	Breathing into each part of the body

	THE ESSENCE OF YOGA: YOGA BASICS week 3 practice				
WARM UP	Sun Breath / Lateral Sun Breath Neck and shoulder release Seated Twist	 Baby Cradle	 Bhagerasana Tiger	Sunbird Balance	ASANA
 Eka Pada Rajakapotasana One-Legged King Pigeon	Hip Circles	 Balasana Child's Pose	Rag Doll HA breath	 Tadasana Mountain	 Plank
 Salabhasana Locust	Windshield Wiper calves hip circles	 Anahatasana Melting Heart	 Adho Mukha Svanasana Downward Facing Dog	 Virabhadrasana I Warrior I	 Virabhadrasana III Warrior III
 5-Pointed Star	 Prasarita Padottanasana Wide-Legged Forward Bend	 Virabhadrasana II Warrior II	 Utthita Parsvakonasana Extended Side Angle	 Parivrtta Parsvakonasana Revolved Side Angle	 Utthita Trikonasana Extended Triangle
 Goddess	 Malasana Squat	 Upavistha Konasana Wide Angle Seated Forward Bend	 Paschimottasana Seated Forward Bend	 Setu Bandhasana Bridge	
COOL DOWN	HA breath w/ slow exhale Seated Barrel Roll Forward Bend and to the sides, back	 Apanasana Knees to Chest			

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