

**THE ESSENCE OF YOGA: YOGA BASICS
WEEK 5**

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!

II. ENERGY AWARENESS: BREATHING THROUGH EACH PART OF THE BODY

Exercise: Breathing through each part of the body. As you breathe, notice where the flow of prana moves freely and where it seems blocked or stuck. Begin by drawing your attention to your breath. Notice your whole body breathing. Now, breathe in and out through each part of your body in turn, beginning with your right foot. Bring your attention to your right foot. Breathe in and out through the toes of the right foot. Breathe in and out through the entire right foot ... ankle ... lower legContinue on to the crown of the head on both sides of the body, including the arms. When you are done, feel your whole body breathing again.

III. NADI SHODHANA: ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATH

instructions: Use the right thumb and right ring finger for Nadi Shodhana. Close the right nostril with the thumb and exhale through the left nostril. Inhale through the left, close using the ring finger and exhale through the right. Inhale through the right, close, exhale left. Continue with smooth, deep breathing through alternating nostrils.

general benefits: Nadi Shodhana stimulates the brain side-to side, synchronizes the hemispheres, and balances any dominance. It strengthens, calms, and regulates the nadis (the nervous system), eliminates wastes and increases assimilation of energy. If you experience dizziness during pranayama then slow down your breathing. If you are gasping, speed up the breath. Breathe less deep if there is nausea.

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. Revolved Side Angle
2. Revolved Triangle
3. Warrior 3
4. Boat (prone)
5. Wide Legged Forward Fold
6. Angle Wide Legged Forward Fold
7. Revolved Wide Legged Forward Fold

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 5 practice
WARM UPS	Comfortable Cross Legged Position → Focus on Ujjayi breath / Bhairava Mudra (Tip! Try counting each breath or repeating “in” “out”.) Sun Breath / Lateral Sun Breath neck and shoulder release Seated Twist (tip! Remember to balance will and surrender.) Seated Cat / Cow Rock the Baby (Baby Cradle) Table Top → Tiger Lunges Sun bird (challenge! Grab your foot!)
ASANA	Pigeon Prone Boat (tip! Anchor the hips. Stretch out from the lower back.) Child’s Pose Downward Facing Dog Warrior 1 Mountain Pose → Chair / Revolved Chair Warrior 3 5 Pointed Star Warrior 2 → Side Angle → Revolved Side Angle → Triangle → Revolved Triangle(r) Warrior 2 → Side Angle → Revolved Side Angle → Triangle → Revolved Triangle(l) Goddess Squat Wide Legged Forward Fold Angle Wide Legged Forward Fold Revolved Wide Legged Forward Fold Relaxed Forward Fold
COOLDOWN	Nadi Shodana Seated Barrel Roll Forward Bend and to the sides, back Knees to Chest
RELAXATION	Breathing into each part of the body

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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	 Uddiyanasana Flying Bird	 Balasana Child's Pose			
 Adho Mukha Svanasana Downward Facing Dog	 Virabhadrasana I Warrior I	 Tadasana Mountain	 Utkatasana Chair	 Utkatasana with Anjali Mudra Twist Chair with Prayer Twist	 Virabhadrasana III Warrior III
 5-Pointed Star	 Virabhadrasana II Warrior II	 Utthita Parsvakonasana Extended Side Angle	 Parivrtta Parsvakonasana Revolved Side Angle	 Utthita Trikonasana Extended Triangle	 Parivrtta Trikonasana Revolved Triangle
 Goddess	 Malasana Squat	 Upavistha Konasana Wide Angle Seated Forward Bend	 Parsva Upavishta Konasana Side Seated Angle	 Parivrtta Upavishta Konasana Revolved Angle Seated Forward Bend	 Marichyasana III Marichi's Pose III
COOL DOWN	 Paschimottanasana Seated Forward Bend	Seated Barrel Roll Forward Bend and to the sides, back	 Apanasana Knees to Chest		

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