

Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga

"Yoga begins with listening."

Richard Freeman

Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga is a life philosophy that helps us create a sentient, healthy body and mind. Practicing asanas in accordance with a precisely determined order gradually leads us to discovering our potentials on all levels – physical, psychological and spiritual-

Ashtanga Yoga Practice

PRACTICE – has to be regular and strenuous, because that is the only way to achieve positive effects.

MYSORE SELF PRACTICE – the traditional way of practicing Ashtanga Yoga in accordance with the theory of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois (Mysore, South India). It means that every student does his own practice, in a group, but for himself and at his own rhythm, while the teacher gives attention physically assists to each individual student with asanas (puts him or her in the position). It is recommended that the students establish daily practice as soon as it is possible.

LED CLASS – the teacher simultaneously (by saying the numbers of the Vinyasas in Sanskrit) leads a group of students through a series of positions. In this way, the Vinyasa is learned, the mistakes are corrected and a dynamic feeling characteristic for this system is created.

There are 3 series of Asanas in Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga system:

- 1. YOGA CHIKITSA** (PRIMARY SERIES) – purifies and corrects the body.
- 2. NADI SHODANA** (INTERMEDIATE SERIES) – opens and purifies energetic canals (Nadias) and, in that way, purifies the nerve system.
- 3. SHITRA BHAGA** (ADVANCED SERIES) – consists of 4 subgroups: A, B, C, D. It joins the strength and the graciousness of the practice – the body is strong and flexible and the mind is still.

TRISTANA – three key elements of this system:

1. Strong breathing with the sound
2. Asana (position)
3. Drishti (focal point)

With the help of TRISTANA, we control our senses and awareness, whereas regular practice and dedication enable us to accomplish the stability of body and mind.

*„Yogash chitta vritti nirodhah“. („Yoga is a complete calmness of mind's activity“.)
Patanjali*

VINYASA – movement synchronized with breathing.

MULA BANDHA – muscle contractions of urogenital system.

UDDIYANA BANDHA – contractions of abdominal muscles.

By performing VINYASA, MULA BANDHA and UDDIYANA BANDHA at the same time, we produce the inner warmth that:

1. purifies muscles and organs
2. eliminates the toxins through sweating
3. enhances the production of hormones and minerals
4. improves blood circulation.

At an advanced level of practice, BANDHA become more energetic or mental, and less physical or muscular.

DISANJE – according to the theory of Shri T. Krishnamacharia i Shri K. Pattabhi Jois **„BREATH IS LIFE“**. It initiates the action, the action takes us to the position, and every movement becomes delicate, precise and stable. Inhalation is followed by exhalation, without keeping your breath (Kumbhaka).

*„Sthira-sukham-asanam“. („Stable and firm position“)
Patanjali*

ASHTANGA YOGA MANTRAS

The practice should begin and end with the mantra. The role of the mantra is to take us to higher levels of awareness.

ASHTANGA YOGA MANTRAM (opening mantra) and **MANGALA MANTRAM** (finishing mantra). The first one is said before the beginning of the practice and helps us to focus on the breath, whereas the second one is said at the end of the practice. These mantras do not have a religious character.

ASHTANGA YOGA MANTRAM (opening mantra) – is said before the beginning of the practice and helps us to focus on the breath.

OM

Vande gurunam caranaravinde

Sandarsita svatma sukhavabodhe

Nihsreyase jangalikayamane

Samsara halahala mohasantyai

Abahu purusakaram

Sankhacakrasi dharinam

Sahasra sirasam svetam

Pranamami Patanjalinam

OM

** OM. I bow to the lotus feet of the Gurus; the awakening happiness of one's own Self revealed: beyond better, acting like the jungle physician; pacifying delusion, the poison of Samsara; taking the form of a man to the shoulders; holding a conch, a discus and a sword; one thousand heads white; to Patanjali I salute. OM.*

MANGALA MANTRAM (finishing mantra) – with this mantra we “close the practice” with respect and gratitude.

OM

Swasti prajabhyah paripalayantam

Nyayena margena mahi mahishaha

Gobrahmanebhyaha shubhamastu nityam

Lokaasamastha sukhino bhavanthu

OM

** OM. May all be well with mankind; may the leaders of the earth protect in every way by keeping to the right path; may there be goodness for those who know the earth to be sacred; may all the worlds be happy. OM.*

ASHTANGA YOGA IS NOT A SPORT – we are only using our body to improve ourselves from the inside.

THIS PRACTICE TEACHES US ABOUT LIFE. When we ask ourselves: „Why is something happening? Where is the meaning? What do we want?“ The answer is inside us, and this method help us to find it.

By learning and practicing Asanas **through body and breath we become familiar with and train our mind.** We awaken the body and the awareness at the same time. We feel unconditional love and happy life.

Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga School

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