

# Yoga

Yoga is an art of living that dates back thousands of years. Its origin is lost in Time in India. Yoga, as an integral method of development, is universal, and thus, the seeds of yogic science have been spreading outside their Indian boundaries and blossoming in almost every country as a science of well being adapted to each and everyone's needs for over fifty years. The benefits of yoga practice can be felt from the first sessions -physically more dynamic, flexible and better breathing. -psychologically regenerated with a better concentration Cultivating the flower of yoga in our heart we blossom in the Garden of Life In our modern society Stress is omnipresent. We live our lives constantly in a hurry trying to meet the necessities of modern life, until our body cries for help. This is where problems start, resulting in weight gain, stomach problems, insomnia, depression and so many others ailments related to modern stress. In order to respond to those problems, the practice of yoga in our modern world is oriented toward physical and mental balance. This is achieved through the practice of postures and breathing exercises that regenerate us more than gymnastic exercise could, yet still giving us the benefits of a full body workout. Since antiquity, yoga has been offering us the tools for an integral art of being, reconnecting us with ourselves and others as well. The word yoga comes from the sanscrit root « yuj » meaning, to yoke, like the union through concentrated effort of the individual consciousness with the universal. As for Hatha yoga, it focuses on the control of the vital force (prana) circulating in the body. Concentrating this vital force and preventing its dissipation yield to the awakening of latent psychic faculties. This psycho-physiological approach of hatha yoga entails purification practices with postures and breath control. Ashtanga yoga is the name given to the system transmitted by Pattabhi Jois from Mysore in India. However, the definition of Ashtanga is a generic term and, as such, does not belong exclusively to the Mysore style of yoga which is closer in its modern practice to classical Hatha yoga than to the classical Ashtanga yoga of Patanjali. Ashtanga yoga means "eight limbs yoga" as explained by Patanjali in his yoga sutra. The yoga sutra is the first yogic scripture in which the different stages of Ashtanga yoga are exposed in a very structured way. The eight stages of Patanjali Ashtanga yoga:

- 1- Yama (ethical rules)
- 2- Niyama (self-discipline)
- 3- Asana (posture)
- 4- Pranayama (breath control)
- 5- Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses)
- 6- Dharana (concentration)
- 7- Dhyana (contemplation)
- 8- Samadhi (absorption)

The practice of series of postures (asanas) purifies the body, and the control of the breath (pranayama) coupled with concentration (dharana) calm down the senses (pratyahara), preparing the way toward meditation (dhyana), and finally leading to the absorption into the Self (samadhi). The whole practice of the asanas and pranayama is rooted into the practice of ethic (yama) and self discipline (niyama). Practically, the concept of vinyasa (transition) helps the practitioner to integrate different stages of the yoga described by Patanjali. This method synchronizes a series of postures with specific breathing techniques (ujayi pranayama). Through this process an intense heat is generated in the body producing perspiration and detoxifying muscles and organs. In Ashtanga yoga the first series of postures is called yoga chikitsa (yoga therapy). The practice of this series purifies the body and internal organs. Each posture has specific benefits. For instance, forward bends stimulate the organs and quiet the mind. The system of Ashtanga yoga emphasises both flexibility and tonicity. Resulting in a light and harmonious body, a better energy flow and a calm mind. Under competent supervision, it is possible to start cultivating the practice of ashtanga yoga

Happiness is the goal, yoga is the bow and you are the arrow