

A basic yoga practices

Sun salutations:

Sun salutations (Surya Namaskar) are a sequence of postures linked together with the breath. They are usually done at the beginning of a yoga practice.



The breath is the most important part of the practice, so throughout the practice of Sun Salutations, keep your attention on your breathing. The breath should be long, smooth and relaxed.

You can do the Sun salutations slowly or as fast as you want, and even add extra postures, as long as the breath remains calm. It is perfectly acceptable to stay in any of the postures for as long as you need to “catch your breath”, and this may be necessary in the beginning if you find the practice strenuous. Remember, if your breathing gets strained, you are no longer doing yoga!

“Perfection” in the postures comes with regular practice, as flexibility and body awareness increases. Be patient with yourself.

Sun salutation should be practiced on a daily basis. Do at least two rounds (one on each side), and gradually build up to twelve. After the Sun salutation, you can practice any postures you like.

To end your practice, sit (or kneel) still for a few minutes, just watching the breath, then if you have more time, add one of the breathing exercises below.

Yoga postures you might like to add:

	Vrikshasana (tree posture) Improves balance, core strength, leg strength
	Navasana (boat posture) Strengthen abdominal muscles, particularly the psoas
	Danurasana (bow pose) Stretches abdominal muscles (including the psoas) Improves digestion. Makes the shoulders more flexible
	Utkatasana (squatting pose) Make hips more flexible and improves digestion
	Trikonasana (triangle pose) Make legs and hips more flexible Improve balance Makes the shoulders more flexible

Breathing practises you may like to add:

- Sitting quietly and watching the breath with a quiet mind, coming back to the breath every time the mind wanders (Anapanasati)
- Make inhalation and exhalation the same length, then lengthen both (sama vritti pranayama).
- Make exhalation twice as long as inhalation then lengthen both (visama vritti pranayama).
- Alternative nostril breathing (nadi sodana pranayama)

End your yoga practice with a few minutes lying on your back in Savasana (the corpse posture), relaxing completely.