

Ashtanga Yoga Asana Practise Sheets



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Said to have been first described in an ancient text called *Yoga Korunta*, Ashtanga Yoga is a disciplined practice of the body and mind, whose aim is to discover our True Self and thus live in harmony with the Universe. It's about manifesting a rhythmic flow of energy and awareness, that enables us to feel connected, whilst promoting good health and heightened spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.

Around two thousand years ago, the Indian sage **Patanjali** composed a work called **Yoga Sutras**, which attempts to outline and standardise Classical Yoga. Expounding upon *Raja Yoga* (how to redefine the mind to serve our needs), Patanjali's underlying principle is the **Eight Limbs** of Classical Yoga, which can lead to liberation.

These eight limbs are: **Yamas** (ethical behavioural codes: *ahimsa* non-violence; *satya* truth; *asteya* not stealing; *brahmacharya* appropriate sexual conduct; *aparigraha* non-greed); **Niyamas** (personal behavioural observances: *sauca* cleanliness of body and mind; *santosha* contentment with what one has; *tapas* austerities and disciplines; *svadhyaya* self study; *isvara pranidhana* surrender and acceptance without expectation); **Asana** (postural practice, to detoxify and open the body and mind); **Pranayama** (vital life force, or breath control and expansion); **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses from external stimulation); **Dharana** (concentration of the mind); **Dhyana** (meditation: focusing the mind on a single entity) and **Samadhi** (a higher state of conscious awareness, where the mind goes beyond the object of meditation and the individual self).

Ashtanga means eight limbs, thus each of these four external and four internal disciplines make up the Ashtanga Yoga practice. For most people, the easiest way to access Ashtanga Yoga, is via the postural practice (the third limb).

The asana method is characterised by the powerful, synchronised breathing and movement system (**vinyasa**); gaze points (**dristi**) and internal energy locks (**bandhas**). The aim of the Ashtanga asana practice is to attain the perfect alignment of the breath, dristi and movement (known as **tristhana**) and through doing so, develop a moving meditation. Throughout the practice, very slow inhalations and exhalations through the nose, allow *prana* (vital energy) to be carried around the subtle body. Coupled with the correct execution of *tristhana*, stagnant energy in the *nadis* (energy channels) and around the *chakras* (energy centres), will be freed and physical or mental disturbances, dissolved.

Through regular practise of a precise sequence of flowing asanas, the body becomes flexible, powerful and light; toxins are removed and the blood cleaned. Many ailments may be improved. Slow controlled breathing and deep concentration create incredible focus and a strong quiet mind, resulting in a feeling of calmness and peace.

In today's asana system (in the tradition of Sri K Pattabhi Jois) there are six series of Ashtanga Yoga asanas: Primary (*Yoga Chikitsa*) to detoxify, balance, open and strengthen the body; Intermediate (*Nadi Sodhana*) to purify the nervous system; Advanced A, B, C and D (*Sthira Bhaga Samapta*) to demonstrate high levels of strength, flexibility, grace and humility. When one asana is mastered in a controlled graceful manner (with calm deep breathing), the next is added until a complete series is practised regularly. The format of the practice comprises the Suryanamaskara Sequences; the Standing Sequence; whichever "Series" the practitioner is working on; Back Bends and the Finishing Sequence. It takes most people, many years to master the *Primary Series*, with its surrounding sections.

With time (as the body and mind purify, grow stronger and become more open), the other aspects of Ashtanga Yoga transpire organically, allowing us to find our true nature and connection to the Universe.

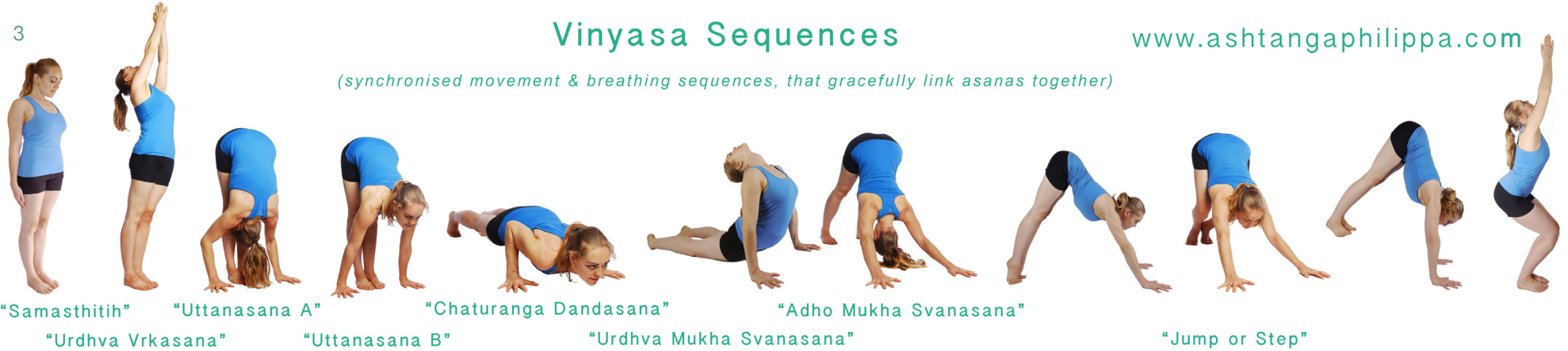
The home of Ashtanga Yoga in the tradition of Sri K Pattabhi Jois, is the *KPJ Ashtanga Yoga Institute* in Mysore, South India. kpjayi.org

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Vinyasa Sequences

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(synchronised movement & breathing sequences, that gracefully link asanas together)



(F) **Full Vinyasa:** takes the form of Suryanamaskara A, until jumping or stepping into the state of the next asana eg: before "Utkatasana"

(S) **Samasthitih:** 'equal standing' or neutral position eg: at the beginning of "Full Vinyasana"



(H) **Half Vinyasa:** uses the middle section of Suryanamaskara A, from jumping into Chaturanga, until jumping or stepping into the next asana eg: after "Utkatasana" lift up & jump back



(V) **Vinyasa from Sitting:** jumping back & jumping through eg: after "Pascimattanasana C or D"



(C) **Cakrasana:** vinyasa from lying down eg: after "Supta Padangusthasana"

4 *Dristi nose unless otherwise stated*

Suryanamaskara A & B

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(5 of each)



A (x 5)
dristi:

1. ekam inhale thumbs



2. dve exhale



3. trini inhale



4. catvari exhale



5. panca inhale



6. sat exhale navel (5 breaths)



7. sapta inhale



8. astau exhale



9. nava inhale thumbs



exhale



B (x 5)
dristi:

1. ekam inhale thumbs



2. dve exhale



3. trini inhale



4. catvari exhale



5. panca inhale



6. sat exhale navel



7. sapta inhale thumbs



8. astau exhale



9. nava inhale



10. dasa exhale

dristi: navel



11. ekadasa inhale thumbs

dristi: thumbs



12. dvadasa exhale



13. trayodasa inhale



14. caturdasa exhale navel (5 breaths)



15. pancadasa inhale



16. sodasa exhale



17. saptadasa inhale thumbs



exhale

5 Dristi nose, unless otherwise stated

Standing Sequence

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(S)

"Padangusthasana"
inhale (5 breaths)

dristi:



"Padahasthasana"
inhale (5 breaths)

(S)



"Utthita Trikonasana A"
(5 breaths)
hand



"Utthita Trikonasana A"
(5 breaths)
hand

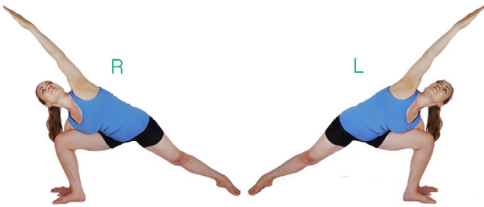


"Utthita Trikonasana B"
(5 breaths)
hand



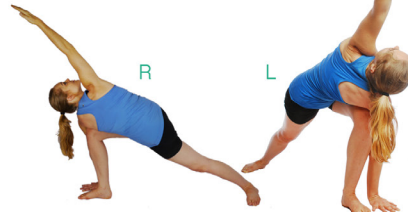
"Utthita Trikonasana B"
(5 breaths)
hand

(S)



"Utthita Parsvakonasana A"
(5 breaths)
hand

dristi: hand



"Utthita Parsvakonasana B"
(5 breaths)
hand

(S)



"Prasarita Padottanasna A, B, C, D"
(5 breaths)



(5 breaths)

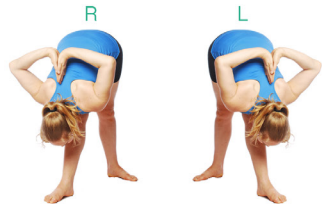


(5 breaths)



(5 breaths)

(S)



"Parsvottanasana"
(5 breaths)
toe

dristi: toe

(S)



"Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana"
(5 breaths)
toe



(5 breaths)
left



exhale
toe



"Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana"
(5 breaths)
toe

(S)



(5 breaths)
right



exhale
toe



(5 breaths)

(S)



"Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana"
inhale (5 breaths)
toe

dristi:

(S)



"Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana"
inhale (5 breaths)
toe

(S) (F)



"Utkatasana"
(5 breaths)
thumbs

(H)



"Virabhadrasana A"
(5 breaths)
thumbs



"Virabhadrasana A"
(5 breaths)
thumbs



"Virabhadrasana B"
(5 breaths)
hand



"Virabhadrasana B"
(5 breaths)
hand

(H)

First Half of Primary Series



"Dandasana"
(5 breaths)

dristi:



(5 breaths)
toes



(5 breaths)
toes



(5 breaths)
toes

practise C or D



(5 breaths)
toes



"Purvattanasana"

(V)



"Ardha Baddha Padma Pascimattanasana"
(5 breaths)

dristi: toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Triyanga Mukhaikapada Pascimattanasana"
(5 breaths)

toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Janu Sirsasana A"
(5 breaths)

toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Janu Sirsasana B"

(5 breaths)

dristi: toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Janu Sirsasana C"

(5 breaths)

toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Maricasana A"

(5 breaths)

toes



(5 breaths)
toes



"Maricasana B"

(5 breaths)

(5 breaths)



"Maricasana C"

(5 breaths)

dristi: right



(5 breaths)
left



"Maricasana D"

(5 breaths)

right



(5 breaths)
left



"Navasana"

(5 breaths)

toes



(Lolasana)

inhale

repeat Navasana sequence 4 times

Back Bending



(C)

"Urdhva Dhanurasana"

exhale
dristi:
inhale up (5 breaths)
nose or floor
exhale
inhale up (5 breaths)
nose or floor
exhale
inhale up (5 breaths)
nose or floor
exhale



"Cakrasana"

inhale
dristi: navel
exhale
inhale
exhale
navel
i n h a l e
nose or floor
exhale
inhale



(V)

"Drop Backs"

exhale
dristi:
inhale
e x h a l e
nose or floor
inhale
exhale
repeat Drop Back sequence twice more

catch legs only when
back & shoulders
are open

"Tirieng Mukha Uttanasana"

inhale
exhale *dangle*
nose or floor
inhale *catch legs*
5 breaths
inhale

"Pascimattanasana"

exhale
toes

Finishing Sequence



"Salamba Sarvangasana"
(10-25 breaths)



"Halasana"
(8-10 breaths)



"Karna Pidasana"
(8-10 breaths)



inhale



"Urdhva Padmasana"
(8-10 breaths)



"Pindasana"
(8-10 breaths)



"Matsyasana"
(8-10 breaths)



"Uttana Padasana"
(8-10 breaths)

(C)



"Sirsasana"
(15-25 breaths)



(10 breaths)



(optional: head off floor, 10 breaths)

inhale



exhale



"Balasana"
(8-10 breaths)

(V)



"Baddha Padmasana"
inhale

dristi:



"Yoga Mudra"
(10 breaths)
nose or third eye



"Padmasana"
(10-25 breaths)



"Utplutih"
(10 breaths)

(V)



Take Rest
eyes closed

(chanting mantras can be an uplifting practice for calming the mind and strengthening concentration)

Opening invocation

OM

VANDE GURUNAM CHARANARAVINDE
SANDARSITA SVATMA SUKAVA BODHE
NIH SREYASE JANGALIKAYAMANE
SAMSARA HALAHALA MOHASANTYAI
ABAHU PURUSAKARAM
SANKHACAKRASI DHARINAM
SAHASRA SIRASAM SVATAM
PRANAMAMI PATANJALIM

OM

Om

*I bow to the lotus feet of our great teacher
who uncovers our true self and awakens happiness.
Like a Jungle physician, he brings complete well-being
and can heal the poison of conditioned existence and illusion.
His torso is human. Carrying a conch,
a discus and a sword,
having a thousand bright heads,
I bow to Patanjali*

Om

Closing chant *(Mangala Mantra)*

SVASTI PRAJABHYAH PARIPALAYANTAM
NYAYENA MARGENA MAHIM MAHISAH
GO BRAHMANEBHYAH SUBHAMASTU NITYAM
LOKAH SAMASTAH SUKHINO BHAVANTU
OM SANTI SANTI SANTI

*May all be well with mankind. May all the leaders of the world
protect in every way, that keeps to the right path.
May there be goodness for those who know the earth to be sacred.
May all the worlds be happy.
Om, Peace, peace, peace*