

Beginning Yoga – Terminology

Sanskrit - Language of Ancient Indian where Yoga originated

YOGA – Union: mind, body & spirit in communication and awareness.

HATHA - Ha = Sun, Tha = Moon; representing duality in balance.

PRANA – Life force, energy that moves through all earthly things. (In Japan = Qi, China = Chi)

NADI - Channel for the movement of prana running through the body like a super highway. There are said to be 72,000 channels running through each body. The three main channels are:

Sushunma – Central flow of prana up the spinal column

Ida – spiral flow of prana up the Sushumna beginning at the left side of the base and exiting through the left nostril, associated with feminine energy

Pingala - spiral flow of prana up the Sushumna beginning at the right side of the base & exiting through the right nostril, associated with masculine energy

CHAKRA – Wheel of light – refers to each of the seven physical areas of the body wherein the three main nadis (Sushunma, Ida & Pingala) intersect. See Chakra Chart.

ASANA - Asana is defined as "posture;" its literal meaning is "seat." Originally, the asanas served as stable postures for prolonged meditation. More than just stretching, asanas open the energy channels, chakras and psychic centers of the body. Asanas purify and strengthen the body and control and focus the mind. Asana is one of the eight limbs of classical Yoga, which states that asana should be steady and comfortable, firm yet relaxed.

PRANAYAMA - When holding a yoga posture, make sure you can breathe slowly and deeply, using your breath control.

VINYASA - Yoga posture sequences are a series of postures arranged to flow together one after the next. This is often called vinyasa or a yoga flow.

ASHTANGA - eight limbs of yoga practice. Each limb relates to an aspect of achieving a healthy and fulfilling life, and each builds upon the one before it.

STHIRA – Firm, Solid, Durable, Lasting, Compact, Persistent, Permanent

SUKHA - Flexible, Pliable, Adaptable, Permissible, Mobile

DUHKHA - Bad space or energy, translated as pain or sorrow.

DIRGA PRANAYAMA – Three Part Breath – Abdomen, Side ribs, upper chest cavity.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA – Victory Breath or Ocean Breath, inhalation air brushes the back of the throat as it enters the body, exhalation air grazes the roof of the mouth as it exits, creating a soft ebb and flow sound of the ocean.

KAPALABHATI PRANAYAMA - Shining Skull breath – 2 extended breaths and 4 quick forced exhale pulses from the diaphragm.

INTELLIGENT EDGE - Go to your edge in the posture, holding where you feel a good stretch and/or your body working, but don't feel pain, strain or fatigue.

SURYA NAMASKA - Sun Salutation – this vinyasa is rarely referred to by its Sanskrit name.

Standing/Sun Salutation Poses

Mountain Pose - Tadasana

Standing Forward Bend - Uttanasana

Plank Pose – Puvottanasana

Knees, Chest, and Chin in a line just off the floor - Chattaranga Dandasana

Cobra Pose - Bhujangasana

Downward Facing Dog - Adho Mukha Svanasana

Cat/Cow Sequence

Crow Pose - Bakasana

Standing Straddle Forward Bend - Prasarita Padottanasana

Warrior I - Virabhadrasana I

Warrior II - Virabhadrasana II

Reverse Warrior

Extended Side Angle Pose - Utthita Parsvakonasana

Triangle Pose - Trikonasana

Seated Poses

Staff Pose (Seated- legs straight) - Dandasana

Seated Straight legged Forward Bend - Paschimottanasana

Butterfly Pose - Baddha Konasana

Cross-legged Easy Pose - Sukasana

Half Lord of the Fishes Pose - Ardha Masyendrasana

Head to Knee Pose - Janu Sirsanana

Seated Wide Legged Straddle - Upavistha Konasana

Resting/Supine Poses

Child's Pose - Balasana

Corpse Pose - Savasana

Happy Baby Pose - Ananda Balasana

Reclined Big Toe Pose - Supta Padangusthasana (Use a Strap)

Supine Spinal Twist - Supta Masyendrasana

Backbends

Bridge Pose - Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Supported version with a block)

Plough Pose - Halasana

Balancing Poses

Side Plank Variations - Vasisthasana Variations

Tree Pose - Vrksasana

13 Obstacles to Yoga Practice

The path of yoga can be long and hard, filled with obstacles, pitfalls, and detours. Luckily, yogic philosophy provides a roadside assistance program to aid you when you become stuck. The yogis who have traveled the path before us have left us a troubleshooting guide called the 13 obstacles of yoga. The nine main obstacles of yoga are:

1. *Vyadhi* - Illness, disease, physical or mental. It is difficult to do yoga if you are physically sick. Thus it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle for the prevention of illness and promotion of optimal health.
2. *Styana* - Apathy, disinclination towards performing ones kartavya or duty. By procrastinating, we avoid our practice and create excuses for not being on the path and doing the work.
3. *Sanshaya* - doubting ones capability or the result of yoga. We can only come to know Reality, declares the Brihad-Āranyaka-Upanishad (4.4.23), when we are free from doubt. It is important to cultivate faith in oneself as well as the yogic path.
4. *Pramada* - Heedlessness, carelessness, a lack of persistence. Yoga is both a science and art and approaching it without skill, care, respect and devotion will create erratic and possible negative results.
5. *Alasya* - Sloth, inertia of mind or body due to dominance of the tamasic element. Yoga requires discipline, zeal and tapas (will-power) to succeed on its path. Laziness will prevent you from attaining your highest potential.
6. *Avirati* - Overindulgence, attachment to pleasurable things. We must learn to “let go” of our attachments to desire and physical objects if we are to make progress in yoga.
7. *Bhrantidarshan* - False vision, a premature sense of certainty. The development of a false notion about the practice of yoga and its outcome can not only lead one off the path of yoga, but also create harm and disappointment.
8. *Alabdha-bhumikatva* - Non-attainment of the next yogic stage or accomplishment. This happens due to faulty or poor practice and creates a feeling of being “stuck” and leads to discouragement.
9. *Anawasthitatwa* - Instability, non-permanence of a yogic accomplishment or stage. Not able to maintain an attained stage can be a real drag. This again can be a result of faulty or poor practice.

When any of these primary obstacles are encountered, four minor obstacles may appear according to the circumstances:

1. *Duhkha* - Pain or sorrow
2. *Daurmanasya* - depression, pain caused by non-fulfilment of desires.
3. *Angamejayatwa* - the shivering of parts of the body.
4. *Shvâsa-prashvâsa* - disturbances in kumbhaka or breath retention causing the irregular breathing pattern that comes with mental agitation.

You will need to be able to remove all these obstacles at will to be successful in yoga. They may appear at any time, and if not conquered during their first appearance, they are most likely to return until you learn how to overcome them.

The key to the removal of any and all of the above obstacles is the cultivation of the one-pointedness of mind. These obstacles will naturally pass with time unless we allow ourselves to become entangled and bogged down in them. By focusing all of your attention on a single object the obstacles dissolve and begin to lose their importance and power.

Beginning Yoga – Further Study *Yoga as a way of Life*

What are the Eight Limbs of Yoga?:

According to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, one of the ancient texts that is the basis for the philosophy behind yoga, there are eight “limbs” (*Ashtanga in Sanskrit*) of yoga. Each limb relates to an aspect of achieving a healthy and fulfilling life, and each builds upon the one before it. You may be surprised to hear that only one of the limbs involves the performance of yoga postures. Here is a description of the eight limbs.

1. **Yama:** Five ethical guidelines regarding moral behavior towards others:

Ahimsa: Nonviolence

Satya: Truthfulness

Asteya: Nonstealing

Brahmacharya: Nonlust

Aparigraha: Noncovetousness

2. **Niyama:** Five ethical guidelines regarding moral behavior towards oneself:

Saucha: Cleanliness

Santosa: Contentment

Tapas: Sustained practice

Svadyaya: Self study

Isvara pranidhana: Surrender to God

3. **Asana:** Practice of yoga postures.

4. **Pranayama:** Practice of breathing exercises.

5. **Pratyahara:** Withdrawal of the senses, meaning that the exterior world is not a distraction from the interior world within oneself.

6. **Dharana:** Concentration, meaning the ability to focus on something uninterrupted by external or internal distractions.

7. **Dhyana:** Meditation. Building upon Dharana, the concentration is no longer focused on a single thing but is all encompassing.

8. **Samadhi:** Bliss. Building upon Dhyana, the transcendence of the self through meditation. The merging of the self with the universe. Sometimes translated as enlightenment.

Sources:
Light on Life, B.K.S. Iyengar, 2005.
Yoga: The Iyengar Way, Mira Silva and Shyam Mehta, 1990.

