

About Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga has its origins in Mysore, India. It is a series of set asana sequences linked by the breath. The practice was popularised around the world through the teachings of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, his daughter Saraswati Jois and grandson Sharath Jois.

Benefits of Ashtanga Yoga

Through regular practice the body becomes flexible, strong and stamina is increased. Slow controlled breathing and deep concentration creates focus and a strong quiet mind, resulting in a feeling of calmness and peace. Regular practitioners also experience increased clarity, vitality and an overall sense of wellbeing.

Important Aspects of Ashtanga Yoga

Tristhāna:

This means the three places of attention or action: posture, breathing system and looking place (drsti). These three are very important for yoga practice, and cover three levels of purification: the body, nervous system and mind. They are always performed in conjunction with each other.

Vinyāsa:

Vinyāsa means breathing and movement system. For each movement, there is one breath. Generally upward movements are inhaled, downward movements are exhaled.

The purpose of vinyāsa is for internal cleansing. Breathing and moving together while performing asanas warms the body, and heats and thins the blood so it can circulate freely, relieving the body of aches and pains. Sweat is an important by-product of vinyāsa, as according to Ayurveda, toxins are released from the body via sweat as such it is considered good for the health to break a sweat each day.

Dṛṣṭi

Dṛṣṭi means gazing point. If the dṛṣṭi indicated for the asana is too difficult, then use nasagre dṛṣṭi (nose). Practising dṛṣṭi helps concentrate the mind, and starts the journey of drawing our senses inwards. Keep the gaze soft.

Ūrdhvadrṣṭi- up to space

Bhrūmadhya dṛṣṭi- third eye

Nāsāgre dṛṣṭi- tip of the nose

Pārśva dṛṣṭi- right side & left side

Nābhō dṛṣṭi- navel

Hastāgre dṛṣṭi- tip of the middle finger

Aṅguṣṭhāgre dṛṣṭi- tip of the thumb

Pādāgre dṛṣṭi- tip of the big toe