

Ashtanga Yoga Overview

Ashtanga vinyasa yoga, usually referred to simply as Ashtanga yoga, is a style of yoga developed and popularized by K. Pattabhi Jois and is often promoted as a modern-day form of classical Indian yoga. Ashtanga Yoga is named after the eight limbs of yoga mentioned in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, and it encourages the practice of all eight limbs of yoga. "Power yoga" and "vinyasa yoga" are generic terms that may refer to any type of vigorous yoga exercise derived from Ashtanga yoga. There is a specific set of sequences in Ashtanga Yoga, and less emphasis on alignment.

Sequences & Series

Typically, an Ashtanga practice begins with 5 Surya Namaskar A and 5 B, followed by a standing sequence. Following this the practitioner begins one of 6 series, followed by what is called the closing sequence. The 6 series are:

- The Primary series (Yoga Chikitsa: Yoga for Health or Yoga Therapy),
- Intermediate series (Nadi Shodhana: The Nerve Purifier) (also called second series),
- The Advanced Series (Sthira Bhaga: Centering of Strength):
 - Advanced A (also called third series),
 - Advanced B (also called fourth series),
 - Advanced C (also called fifth series) and
 - Advanced D (Sthira Bhagah) (also called sixth series).

Some Ashtanga yoga teachers believe that a student must master postures before they can move onto the postures that follow, but other teachers allow students to practice in a non-linear format. The non-linear format and offering variations to postures is becoming more common in Ashtanga yoga.

Ashtanga emphasizes Tristhana, which mean the three places of attention, including: pranayama, asana, and drishti (point of focus). It is believed that these three points of focus cover the three levels of purification (purification of the nervous system, the body, and the mind). Pattabhi Jois recommended staying in postures for five to eight breaths, inhaling for 10-15 seconds and exhaling for 10-15 seconds.

Different Than Power Yoga

Sometimes people think of power yoga as a form of Ashtanga Yoga, but they are not related. Power yoga is a style of yoga created by Bryan Kest, in the late 80s and early 1990s. Baron Baptiste also put his own spin on the style, and branded it. Neither Baron Baptiste's power yoga nor Bryan Kest's power yoga are synonymous with Ashtanga yoga. In 1995, Pattabhi Jois wrote a letter to *Yoga Journal* expressing his disappointment at the association between his Ashtanga yoga, and the newly coined style "power yoga", referring to it as "ignorant bodybuilding"

Mantra

Ashtanga practice is traditionally started with the following mantra:

vande gurūṇām caraṇāravinde saṁdarśita svātma sukhāvabodhe
niḥśreyase jāṅgalikāyamāne saṁsāra hālāhala mohaśāntyai
ābāhu puruṣākāraṁ śaṅkhacakrāsi dhāriṇam
sahasra śirasam śvetam praṇamāmi patañjalim

This is roughly translated into English as:

I bow to the lotus feet of the gurus,
The awakening happiness of one's own self revealed,
Beyond better, acting like the jungle physician,
Pacifying delusion, the poison of Samsara.
Taking the form of a man to the shoulders,
Holding a conch, a discus, and a sword,
One thousand heads white,
To Patanjali, I salute.

On the next pages, you will find the primary series of Ashtanga Yoga.

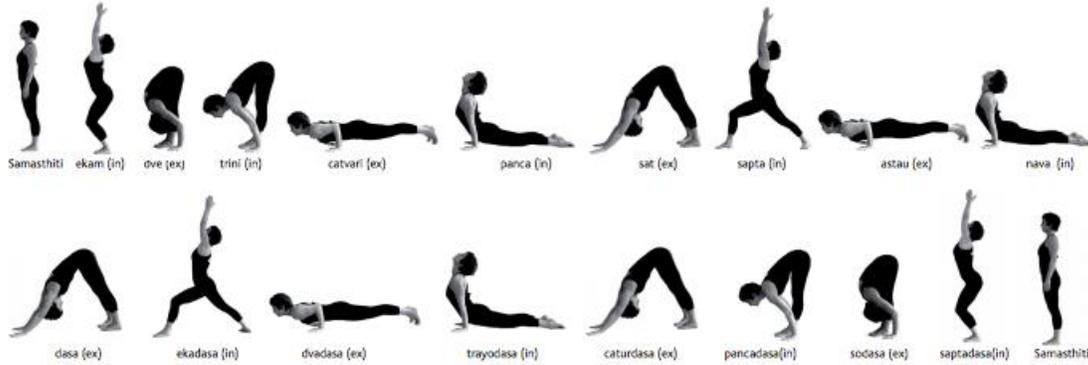
Ashtanga Yoga – Primary Series

Suryanamaskara A (9 Vinyasas)

Om



Suryanamaskara B (17 vinyasas)



Standing Sequence:



After completing the standing postures, you will add a vinyasa between each asana.

Vinyasa :



Seated Postures



Dandasana



Paschimottasana A



B



C



Purvottasana



Ardha Baddha Padma



Triang Mukha-Eka-Pada



Janu Shirsasana A



B



C



Marichyasana A



B



C



D



Navasana



Bhujapidasana



Kurmasana



Supta Kurmasana



Garbha Pindasana



Kukkutasana



Badha Konasana A



B



Upavishtha Konasana



Supta Konasana



Supta Padangusthasana



Supta Padangusthasana



Ubhaya Padangusthasana



Urdhva Mukha Paschimottasana



Setu Bandhasana

Finishing Sequence:



Urdhva Dhanurasana



Paschimottasana



Salamba Sarvangasana



Halasana



Karnapidasana



Urdhva Padmasana



Pindasana



Mathsyasana



Uttana Padmasana



Shirsasana



Bolasana



Bolasana



Badha Padmasana



Yoga Mudra



Parvatasana



Chin Mudra



Upluthih



Savasana