

# Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

Śrī K. Pattabhi Jois

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## Introduction & Foundation

- **Rooted in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras**

Ashtanga literally means “*eight limbs*”, referencing Patañjali's system:

- Yama (ethical restraints)
- Niyama (observances)
- Āsana (posture)
- Prāṇāyāma (breath control)
- Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of senses)
- Dhāraṇā (concentration)
- Dhyāna (meditation)
- Samādhi (absorption)
- **Jois's Central Teaching:** Mastery of the *first four* (yama → prāṇāyāma) naturally leads to the higher limbs.
- **Vinyasa System:** Breath and movement linked in a precise sequence. Cleanses the body and prepares the nervous system.

***“Practice, practice, practice – and all is coming.”***

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## The Method of Vinyasa

- Every movement has a **breath count**.
- Breath is **deep, even, and controlled** (*ujjāyī*).
- Sweating during practice is essential – considered a form of purification.

**Tristhāna (three points of focus):**

1. **Āsana** (posture) – stability and alignment
  2. **Prāṇāyāma** (breath) – controlled, rhythmic breathing
  3. **Dṛṣṭi** (gaze) – focus point for concentration
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**Primary Series: *Yoga Chikitsa* (Yoga Therapy)**

- **Purpose:** Cleanses and strengthens the body, purifies the organs, and builds flexibility.
- **Key Benefits:** Improves digestion, detoxifies muscles and blood, opens hips and hamstrings.
- **Themes:** Grounding, foundational, cleansing.

**Structure:**

- Sun Salutations (Sūrya Namaskāra A & B)
  - Standing sequence (stability and alignment)
  - Seated sequence (forward folds, hip openers, twists)
  - Marichyasanas (deep binds and detoxifying twists)
  - Finishing sequence (backbends, inversions, lotus variations, rest in Śavāsana)
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**Intermediate Series: *Nadi Śodhana* (Nerve Purification)**

- **Purpose:** Purifies the *nāḍīs* (energy channels), works deeper on the nervous system.
- **Key Benefits:** Balances prāṇa, strengthens spine and nervous system, prepares for deeper pranayama.
- **Themes:** Backbends, strength, deeper spinal flexibility.

## Highlights:

- Stronger backbends (Kapotasana, etc.)
  - Arm balances (Pincha Mayurasana, Karandavasana)
  - Deep hip and shoulder openers
  - Advanced lotus variations
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## Philosophy & Discipline

- **Tapas (heat, discipline)** is created by daily practice.
- The method is not about performance, but purification of body and mind.
- Students are encouraged to **practice 6 days per week**, resting on Moon days and one day of the week (traditionally Saturday).

*“Do your practice and all is coming.”*

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## The Benefits of Yoga Chikitsa

- **Physical:** detoxification, strength, stamina, flexibility, improved digestion.
  - **Mental:** focus, clarity, reduction of anxiety, control of senses.
  - **Spiritual:** preparation for the inner limbs — meditation and samādhi.
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## Closing Thoughts

Śrī K. Pattabhi Jois frames Aṣṭāṅga not merely as a set of postures, but as a **spiritual discipline**.

Through steady practice of asana, breath, and focus, the practitioner purifies body

and mind — preparing for the higher states of yoga.

***“Without effort, nothing can be achieved.”***