



SURYA YOG

Sun Yoga-Swallow the Sun

www.suryayog.com

Dedicated to the Sun, the giver of heat, light & life.
On 21 June 2015, the 'International Day of Yoga'

Background

Aristotle *'Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom'*

Throughout the ages one has continuously asked fundamental questions like who, why, how and what in search of truth. We have explored everything from a tiny atom to the vast cosmos but we know very little about ourselves.

Without the 'self knowledge', we do not know the purpose of our life and therefore are unable to understand our relationship with the cosmos. This fragmented awareness of ourselves is the cause of our fear. One is therefore, not able to think and act appropriately. This fear is also the root cause of all conflict and exploitation that we observe around our world.

One is always looking for joy in life. Our egos want to own everything and control everyone to seek happiness. But in reality, our own bodies and minds are not fully in our command.

Our lives are a function of our consciousness. Being conscious is a state of being aware of all our experiences in our day-to-day existence. Our experiences are recorded as thoughts and saved as memory in our brain cells. Therefore, we are nothing but a bundle of thoughts. One can only record an experience when one is aware. Therefore, to live fully one has to think and act with total awareness.

Surya yog is a journey towards the sun. After merging ourselves into the sun, our individuality or ego disappears and our consciousness expands across the cosmos with the rays of the sun to encompass everything as a part of our own existence. Being 'One' with the sun is the aim of surya yog.

Surya yog ebook is divided into the following sections:

- I. Surya yog (an introduction to the practice of sun yoga and our evolution into a superman)
- II. Surya namaskar (a group of dynamic asanas or workout to energize our body)
- III. Surya pranayam (a breathing exercise to absorb sun's vital life force to turbo charge our mind)
- IV. Surya dhyam (sun meditation to transcend our ordinary consciousness into sun consciousness)
- V. Daily practice (A guideline for practicing surya yog)

I. Surya Yog

Surya is the 'sun' and yog is to 'join' or to become 'one', in Sanskrit language. Surya yog is an ancient practice to absorb surya oorja (solar energy) to grow our body power, thought power and will power. By this awakened power and awareness, our ordinary consciousness is transformed into sun consciousness and one becomes a superman.

By the practice of surya yog, one attains joy, peace and harmony with the cosmos. Surya yog is the beginning of a journey towards our inner transformation of thoughts and outer transformation of our actions. Just like the sun, one lives a life to only give.

What is Yog?

'Yogashchittavrittinirodhah'

As per Patanjali's Yog Sutra, Yog¹ is to be devoid of thought. One can only become thoughtless by pursuing every thought with absolute awareness. Just as the sun dispels darkness, by surya yog, our thoughts get magnified and one is able to gain total command over the thinking process.

Why is Sun 'the almighty'?

Sun is omnipotent or all-powerful as his potent rays are responsible for the creation, evolution and transformation of everything on our earth. Sun is omnipresent or all present as the cosmos is pervaded by sun's electromagnetic radiation. Solar vibrations are instantly present everywhere at all times. Sun is also omniscient or all knowing, as everything has evolved under the watchful eyes of the sun.

Sun is the Soul of the world

'Surya atma jagatas tasthushascha'

As per Rig Veda, Sun is the soul of the world.

Sun is the source of heat, light and life. Sun is not merely a huge orb of atomic energy but a radiant mass of life-giving vitality to everyone. All activity and growth on our earth is due to the life force from the sun. Sun is the creator of time and source of all our energy. Over the time, our evolution has taken place under the sun. Sun does not work but just exists and sun's existence

¹Yog is just not about bending head and tail or holding the breath; otherwise monkey and turtle would have been great yogis.

is the cause of all the activity in our lives and on our earth. Solar energy pervades the entire cosmos and is even present in an atom.

At sunrise, everyone from a tiny ant to a mighty elephant, all plants and trees on our earth become alert, attentive and aware to absorb the solar energy. One must also awake, arise and await the sun at dawn to imbibe and bask under the nourishing rays of the sun and again see off the sun at dusk. As early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

Sun is the creator, nourisher and transformer of the world

'Suryad bhavanti bhutani suryen palitanitu. Surya layam prapnuvanti ya suryaha sohamevacha.'

As per Suryopanishad, all living beings are created by the sun; the sun nurtures them and they merge into the sun. I am 'one' with the sun.

Sun's infrared rays provide the warmth of love that is required to germinate the seed in the earth and for the growth of a baby in the mother's womb. Thus the creation always happens in the darkness. Sunlight or sun's visible rays provide the required nourishment and energy for photosynthesis in plant and trees. Sunlight also bestows health and vitality in human beings. Sun's ultraviolet rays are responsible for genetic transformation and evolution of our consciousness.

The rising sun denotes creation or growth. The mid-day sun denotes sustenance or maturity. Whereas, the setting sun denotes death or transformation.

Surya, Aditya and Savita - the three Suns

Our sun exists at three levels from gross to subtle.

Surya is the physical ball of fire that gives us heat and light. Surya increases ojas in our body. Thereby one radiates health and vitality. Also, qualities like confidence, bravery and hardworking develop in us.

Aditya is the cosmic intelligence that transforms our thoughts. Aditya increases tejas in our mind. Thereby one gains foresight, discrimination and intelligence. Our ignorance is removed and one is ready to imbibe higher knowledge and wisdom.

Savita is the cosmic consciousness or the will power and the ultimate cause of all manifestation. Savita increases brahmvarchas in

our personality. Thereby one develops righteousness, dedication to serve, kind-heartedness, mercy, compassion and love.

Sun is our primordial guru and the greatest yogi

Guru is a Sanskrit word and means one who dispels darkness with the light of knowledge. Without the sun there will be no light and no evolution. Sun is also an absolute yogi and has perfected all forms of yoga. By surya yog, we can invoke and imbibe the below mentioned qualities and radiate ourselves like the sun.

Karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action: Over the last five billion years the sun is burning Himself to give the heat, light and life on our earth selflessly, just out of its existence. Sun will keep on doing the same over the next five billion years. Sun is not performing an action. Action involves a will and is called as karma. Karma is binding, as there is an expectation of the result. An outcome due to sun's nature or existence is karma yoga. Karma yoga is liberating, as there is no expectation out of the selfless action.

Bhakti yoga, the yoga of selfless love: The sunrays travel at the speed of 186,000 miles per second, or it takes just about eight minutes to deliver the warmth and nourishment to us on earth without any discrimination by our race, geography and religion.

Gyan yoga, the yoga of intelligence: Sun is responsible for the evolution of everything including us on earth. He sees all, knows all and nothing is hidden under his cosmic vibrations. Sun is the sole cause of our evolution.

Raj yoga, the yoga of concentration and self control: The sun always stays at the centre of our solar system and is in control, without being attached or detached to anyone. Just as a bee wonders around the flowers for nourishment, our earth also rotates and revolves around the sun to absorb the life energy for survival.

Kriya yoga, the yoga of breath: Just as our heart and lungs keep on pumping blood and air for our survival, the sun keeps on sending the photons and the cosmic energy across the solar system for our nourishment.

Agni yoga, the yoga of fire: The sun burns Himself to provide cosmic energy to bake our earth. All humans, animals and plants grow with

the nourishment of the sunlight. The rays of the sun purify our health and restore its vitality.

Mantra yoga, the yoga of sound: As per Chandogya Upanishad, the sun chants 'Om' as he moves in the cosmos. The astronomers have captured the cosmic vibration or the sound of the sun. All the planets in our solar system are happily and graciously moving around the sun.

Hatha yoga, the traditional yoga: 'Ha' is Sun and 'Tha' is moon in Sanskrit. The sun and moon have great influence on our earth and on our body, mind and consciousness. The sun twists and bends on its axis to create sunspots, release the solar flares and magnetic storms that are responsible of flooding the cosmos with vitality and energy.

Sun is the creator of time and cycles

Sun is the cause of time. As day and night, summer and winter, and fortnightly lunar cycles are all defined by the sun. Cyclic activity is omnipresent in all natural phenomena. Almighty sun or the tiny atom, all are perpetually in a state of harmonic vibration. These vibrations generate tremendous energy and force. Some of the key cycles are:

Suncycle is an eleven-year solar cycle. Currently, we are in the middle of the twenty-fourth solar cycle that started in the year 2009 and will end around 2020. During the solar cycle the plasma core or the poles of the sun flip and there is an outpouring of solar flares, coronal mass ejection, sunspots and sun storm energy from the sun. The radiation caused by these cycles has tremendous effect on our body, mind and consciousness. The outpour from the sun's corona causes the solar winds of magnetic energy that also affect the earth's atmosphere.

Annual *earthcycle* is caused by the revolution of the earth on its orbit around the sun. Again, our life and all our activities are based on the yearly and daily cycles. The earth cycles are in absolute harmony and are perfectly timed as four seasons for the life to flourish. By rotating on its own axis, the earth ensures that it evenly absorbs the solar radiation to energize itself.

A twenty-four hour cycle on its axis is responsible for a day and night. Daylight triggers secretion of serotonin, the feel good hormone whereas melatonin hormone, released in the darkness, is responsible for regulating the flow

of other hormones based on our biological clock set by the sun. These hormones are responsible for growth and revitalization of our cells. Therefore, our lives must be aligned with the sun, just like the sunflower and lotus, who follow the movement of the sun.

A fifteen-day lunar cycle is the cause of full moon and no moon nights. Tides in the seas are caused by the lunar cycle. The lunar cycles also have great effect on our mind.

Our cycles of inhalation and exhalation during respiration, beating of the heart and circulation of blood, our birth to death lifecycle are all defined by the sun. Our breath cycle is the most essential activity in our life. By yogic breathing, one can acquire and absorb large amounts of solar energy from the cosmic reservoir for great achievements.

Sun and water cycle

Sun is responsible for the water cycle and therefore our sustenance on earth. The potent rays of the Sun evaporates the drop of water from the ocean, the drop of water becomes cloud in the sky, the cloud transforms into a snowflake and falls on the mountains or falls a drop of rain on the earth, the drop flows as a river and nourishes our lives and finally merges back into the ocean. The drop of water is constantly purified by the sunlight. We will not have natural purified drinking water without the sun.

Sun transforms our thoughts

By surya yog, the rays of the sun enter our mind and quiet our thoughts. A quiet mind is peaceful and in absolute order. Orderly mind has enormous energy. This energy, if harnessed properly, is the key to our transformation and evolution of our consciousness.

As you think, so you become. Therefore, let us be aware of our thoughts and let our thoughts be as radiant as the sun. Because our thoughts define our words, our words define our actions, our actions define our habit, our habits define our character and our character defines our destiny. Thus, a man is the master of his destiny.

Thought makes a man and in turn, man makes civilization. There is a powerful thought-force behind every religion, philosophy and invention. Thought transforms and writes the history of the world.

Sun broadcasts thoughts

By surya yog, a conscious bond is created between ourselves and the sun enabling us to communicate with each other via the photons. Once we attune ourselves to the sun, one can project a thought to the sun and in turn not only obtain guidance but can also get the thoughts broadcasted across the cosmos with magnified force. Therefore, let us look at the sun with total awareness, peace and joy to bring harmony on our earth.

Sun and our body

'Yat pinde tat brahmande'.

Our body is a tiny cosmos.

The sun in the centre of our solar system. Similarly every single atom or a cell is a micro cosmos, with nucleus at its centre. Solar plexus is the centre of our body, which generates and distributes the energy to each and every cell. By connecting with the sun we can make our solar plexus potent so that our body and mind are radiant, full of vitality and love. Also, by meditating on the sun one is able to download the knowledge of ourselves and the entire cosmos. The secrets taking place in the womb of nature are automatically revealed.

Sun and our health

Our global healthcare spending will be USD 7Trillion in 2015 or just around USD 1000 per person every year.

Our modern medicine, allopathy predominantly treats the symptom and not the cause. Antibiotics make the bacteria drug resistant, which defy any treatment. Our antibodies become too weak to defend various illnesses. By surya yog, we imbibe the potent rays of the sun to enhance our immunity. Sun works at a deeper level by fixing the cause of the disease and making us as potent as a hulk. Thereby, one can attain robust health and vitality till the end of our life and can get rid of the increasing medical cost.

Sunday fasting

Sunday is the day of the sun. Observe a fast for good health and vitality. Sunday fasting is a potent way to flush out our toxins and get ready to absorb the potent rays of the sun.

According to Harvard Medical School, fasting increases lifespan, is anti-aging, reduces cholesterol and fat, boosts our immune system, cuts the risk of heart disease, diabetes and

rejuvenates us. On top of this, fasting provides us a great opportunity for meditation and contemplation as our thoughts slowdown to a great extent.

One should take light dinner before sunset on Saturday and not eat anything till Monday morning. During the fasting period, water can be taken from Sunday noon till the sunset. Also, one can observe silence during the entire period of fasting. One can eat a fruit on Sunday noon, if the fast seems tough in the beginning. One should take a fruit or drink fruit juice to break the fast on Monday morning.

Solar energy

Our power need on earth is around 16 Terawatts that includes everything from the fuel for our automobile, to wood burned to cook, to coal burned electricity for lighting, heating, air conditioning, computer and gadgets. In the year 2020 our power demand is expected to grow to 20 Terawatts.

All our power requirements in future will come from the sun as the solar energy falling on earth's land is around 120,000 TW. This energy is clean, efficient and can be harnessed by everyone.

Gayatri Mantra to invoke Savita or the Sun

Gayatri is a Sanskrit word. 'Gaya' means Prana² and 'Tri' to liberate. Gayatri is the one that liberates prana for evolution of our consciousness. Mantra is composed of syllable 'Man' mind and 'Tra' to liberate. Mantra yog is the yoga of sound. As per ancient yogis, sound has incredible power to influence our body and mind.

Prana is composed of syllable 'Pra' and 'An'. 'An' is the vital force and 'Pra' is a prefix meaning constant. Therefore, prana is the constant cosmic force. This life force commences at conception in mother's womb and continues till the end of our life. Sun is the source of all prana. Prana is subtler than the air we breathe. Even a thought cannot originate, without the force of prana.

By repeated chanting of gayatri mantra our thought vibrations are synchronised with the potent vibrations of the sun thereby our ordinary consciousness evolves. Our mind is liberated of thoughts and one experiences higher consciousness.

By Gayatri Mantra, we invoke the sun. Gayatri mantra is as follows:

Om Bhur Bhuvah Svah

Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat

As noted in Rig Ved, Yajur Ved & Atharva Ved

Word by word meaning:

Om – Brahman, Sun consciousness

Bhur – Our body

Bhuvah – Our mind

Svah – Our consciousness

Tat – That Absolute

Savitur – Savita, the Sun

Varenyam – fit to be imbibed

Bhargo – Purifying

Devasya – Divine

Dheemahi – We meditate

Dhiyo – Our intellect

Yo – Who/Which, Nah - Our

Prachodayat – Inspire

A very simple meaning of the Gayatri mantra is *O'Sun, inspire me to think good and do good'*

'Om Bhur Bhuvah Svah'

Om defines cosmology. It is the primordial vibration or cosmic sound of the big bang and the cause of the creation of our cosmos. Om is pronounced by the sun and heard by yogis in meditation. It is omnipresent and even pervades an atom. Om represents our conscious, sub-conscious and unconscious mind. Objective of one's life is to transcend the above three states of our mind to superconscious state and attain freedom by liberating ourselves from the bondage of ignorance. 'Bhur Bhuvah Svah' are known as vyahritis (Vya-all pervasive, Ahriti-cosmic knowledge). The cosmic energy pervades our body, mind and consciousness.

'Tat Savitur Varenyam'

The omnipotent brilliance of sun is absorbed by us. The light vibrations are absorbed by our body, mind and consciousness. We obtain dynamic healthy, intelligence and radiate joy.

'Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi'

We meditate on the divine omniscient and purifying rays of the sun.

'Dheeyo yonah prachodayat'

O'sun inspire our intellect towards righteousness.

²Prana is the omnipotent cosmic vital force and outpour of the sun. Prana is stored in our solar plexus. One absorbs prana from the sunlight, air, water and food by using our will power.

II. Surya Namaskar

Surya namaskar is a Sanskrit word and means bow to the sun or sun salutation. Surya namaskar is an ancient technique involving a sequence of twelve dynamic asana³. Surya namaskar is performed facing the rising sun at dawn. Surya namaskar balances the pingala and ida nadi⁴ thereby activating flow of prana in sushumna nadi. A balanced nervous system results in optimum secretion of human growth hormones by the endocrine glands which are responsible for good health and longevity. The key endocrine glands are:

- 1.1. Pituitary gland, is the master gland which commands all other glands
- 1.2. Pineal gland, functions as on and off switch based on the sunrise and sunset times, thus producing serotonin during the day and melatonin at night. Serotonin is the feel good hormone whereas melatonin is responsible for regulating the flow of other

³A bodyweight workout that loosens up the joints, flexes the muscles of the body, massages the internal organs and activates the respiratory, circulatory and nervous systems. Asanas prepare the body to meditate in padmasana and harmonizes efficient flow of prana.

⁴As per yoga, prana flows through two channels in our body called as pingala and ida. Pingala or solar nadi is sympathetic nervous system and is represented by dominant right nostril. Pingala is connected with the right side of our body and left hemisphere of our brain. One is physically active and thinks logically when pingala nadi is dominant.

Ida or lunar nadi is parasympathetic nervous system and is represented by dominant left nostril. Ida is connected with the left side of our body and right hemisphere of our brain. One is mentally and emotionally active when ida nadi is dominant.

Prana flows through these channels alternatively every hour. However, during the switchover both the nadis become dominant and they flow with equal force for a small duration of time. This is the flow of sushumna nadi or the central nervous system.

The objective of hatha yoga is to balance pingala and ida nadis to make the prana flow harmoniously through the sushumna nadi. During the flow of sushumna, one is more conducive to meditation because our consciousness transcends our body and mind.

hormones based on the biological clock set by the sun.

- 1.3. Thyroid and parathyroid gland controls the rate of metabolism in our body.
- 1.4. Thymus gland produces antibodies in our body.
- 1.5. Adrenal glands, secretes adrenalin and we take a fight or flight decision.
- 1.6. Pancreas produces insulin to store and utilize sugar in our body.
- 1.7. Reproductive glands are responsible for production of sperm and ova.

Surya namaskar is potent when practiced barefoot with minimum clothes to absorb the solar radiation and electromagnetic energy from both the Sun and the earth.

Why Surya Namaskar?

Surya namaskar is an integral exercise that influences the health of the whole body. All the cells and neurons are turbo charged with the solar energy.

Surya namaskar is probably the only workout that activates and vitalizes all the systems in our body including nervous system, circulatory system, respiratory system, digestive and elimination system, lymphatic system, muscular system, skeletal system and endocrinal systems.

If one feels tired during the day, a few rounds of Surya namaskar will restore lost vitality of our body and mind.

Surya namaskar uses own bodyweight to become strong, potent, radiant and healthy human. Surya namaskar also develops concentration. One should do surya namaskar at a slow pace to become introvert and prepare for the practices of surya pranayam and surya dhyana. Otherwise, one can do surya namaskar at a fast pace as a cardiovascular workout to become extrovert and physically active.

Surya Namaskar technique

Always stand facing towards the sun.

Be aware of the whole body and mind throughout the practice of surya namaskar.

Use yogic breathing throughout the practice of Surya Namaskar. Only breathe through the nose. Inhale when bending backward, as the abdomen and chest expands and induces air into the lungs. Exhale when bending forward, as the chest and abdomen contracts and air is forced out of the lungs.

Mentally chant the gayatri mantra with the breath awareness.

All the movements of various parts of the body in surya namaskar are synchronized in a harmonious and smooth motion.

Position 1: Pranamasana (Prayer pose)



Stand erect with the feet together.

Close the eyes and relax the muscles of the body for the forthcoming practice.

Place the two palms together in front of the chest in an attitude of prayer.

Breathing: Do one surya pranayam.

Position 2: Hastautthanasana (Raised arms pose)



Raise both arms above the head with palms facing forward.

At the end of the movement bend the head, arms and upper trunk backwards while pushing abdomen a little forwards.

Breathing: Inhale while raising the arms and hold the breath.

Position 3: Padahastasana (Hand to foot pose)



Lower the head and simultaneously raise the buttocks while bending forward.

Place the palms of the hands on the ground on each side of the feet.

Keep the legs straight.

Try to touch the knees with the forehead.

Breathing: Exhale while bending forward and contract the abdomen to hold the breath in the final position.

Position 4: Ashwasanchalanasana (Equestrian pose)



Extend the right leg backwards as far as possible while bending the left leg.

In the final position the toes and knee of the right leg are in contact with the ground.

Breathing: Inhale and hold the breath.

Position 5: Parvatasana (Mountain pose)



Raise the right knee and simultaneously lower the head between the arms, towards the ground and bend the back so that the buttocks move upwards.

Extend the left leg backwards and place the left foot beside the right foot.

Breathing: Exhale while performing the movement.

Position 6: Ashtanganamaskara (Bow with eight points)



Lower the body to the ground, first bending the legs and placing the knees in contact with the ground.

Bend the arms and lower the head and trunk to the ground.

At the end of the forward movement of the head and trunk, the chest and the chin are rested on the ground.

Finally raise the abdomen and hips slightly off the ground.

In the final position the eight points are on the ground: the chin, the chest, two palms, two knees and the balls of both feet.

Breathing: Just hold the breath outside.

Position 7: Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)



Lower the hips to the ground.

Simultaneously straighten the arms so that the head and back arch upwards and backwards as far is comfortable.

Try to keep the abdomen close to the ground.

Breathing: Inhale deeply during the movement and hold the breath.

Position 8: Parvatasana (Mountain pose)



This position is a repeat of position 5.

From the arched position of bhujangasana bend the back in the opposite direction and move buttocks upwards.

Keep the arms and legs straight and don't move the position of the hands and feet.

In the final pose the buttocks should be as high as possible, the head should be between the arms and the heels should be gently pressed towards the floor.

Breathing: Exhale while performing the movement and contract the abdomen to hold the breath.

Position 9: Ashwasanchalanasana (Equestrian pose)



This position is a repeat of position 4.

Bend the left leg and bring the left foot forward between the two hands.

Raise the head upwards and lower the right knee to the floor.

Breathing: Inhale and hold the breath in the final position.

Position 10: Padahasthasana (Hand to foot pose)



This position is the same as position 3.

Lower the head and simultaneously raise the buttocks while bending forward.

Place the palms of the hands on the ground on each side of the feet.

Keep the legs straight.

Try to touch the knees with the forehead.

Breathing: Exhale while bending forwards and contract the abdomen to hold the breath in the final position.

Position 11: Hastautthanasana (Raised arms pose)



This position is the same as position 2.

Raise both arms above the head with palms facing forward.

At the end of the movement bend the head, arms and upper trunk backwards while pushing abdomen a little forwards.

Breathing: Inhale while raising the arms and hold the breath.

Position 12: Pranamasana (Prayer pose)



This is the final pose and the same as position 1. Bring back both the palms and hold them together in front of the chest in an attitude of prayer.

Breathing: exhale and hold the breath. Breathe normally while remaining in the final position prior to continuing the practice.

Above twelve positions is half round of surya namaskara. During the other half of surya namaskara the same twelve positions are repeated but instead of right leg the left leg is used in position 4 and 9. This alternation is to ensure that both halves of the body are exercised equally in surya namaskar.

After doing surya namaskar, one should relax the body until the heartbeat and respiration become normal.

Daily practice of surya namaskar

One should practice at least three rounds of surya namaskar everyday.

A beginner should learn and perfect the asana or the postures of surya namaskar during the first week. During the second week one can incorporate breath awareness with surya namaskar. During the third week, one can incorporate gayatri mantra with surya namaskar.

At advanced stage, one can practice surya namaskar with eyes closed. Also, the time taken to complete one round of surya namaskar gradually increases and one becomes introvert with gradual practice.

III. Surya Pranayam

One, who breathes optimally, enjoys good health. But most of us breathe incorrectly, using only a small part of lung capacity. As a result of our shallow breathing our body and brain are starved of air. One also accumulates stagnant air in the lower regions of the lungs. This can lead to growth of germs and diseases of lungs including tuberculosis.

Why Yogic breathing?

Yogic breathing is a deep but relaxed breathing technique and is practiced with absolute awareness. Yogic breathing combines the abdominal, thoracic and clavicular breathing, into one harmonious movement to give the maximum inhalation and exhalation of breath. Deep breathing allows optimal intake of oxygen whereas holding the breath gives optimal time required for exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs.

A few rounds of yogic breathing daily will make one immune to illness including lung infections and the mind becomes calm and revitalized. One acquires power, vitality and one pointed awareness in daily activities. One's thoughts become clear and deep. One must develop the habit of consciously breathing yogically whenever possible.

Yogic breathing technique

Inhale slowly by allowing your abdomen to expand. After abdominal expansion, start to expand your chest outwards and upwards. At the end of inhalation draw the collarbone and shoulders upwards towards our head to inhale extra air. This whole process should be executed in one continuous and harmonious movement.

During exhalation, first relax the collarbone and shoulders, than allow our chest to move, first downwards towards the feet and then inwards. After this allow the abdomen to contract. This completes a round of yogic breathing.

One must hold the breath at the end of each inhalation and exhalation for a convenient time.

Pranayam

Pranayam is made up of two Sanskrit words, Prana and Ayama. Ayama means dimension. Pranayam is an act of absorbing prana by yogic breathing. Ordinarily prana lies in a latent state in human beings and it carries out tasks merely to keep the body alive. However, by pranayam

one activates prana and takes it to a higher dimension. Awakened prana transforms our ordinary consciousness into super consciousness and thereafter one becomes radiant, active, intelligent, creative, intuitive, dynamic, full of love and compassion. One is charged with vigor and vitality one enjoys good health and long life span.

It is a potent practice when incorporated with chanting gayatri mantra mentally.

Why Pranayam?

On an average a human breathes 21,600 times a day or 15 times per minute. By Pranayam, a yogi reduces the number of breaths per minute and at the same time absorbs more energy, thereby increasing his lifespan and vitality.

One can easily, with a little bit of practice, reduce the frequency to one breath per minute and at the same time increase the air intake to five liters compared to just half a liter intake in a normal shallow breathing.

Pranayam slows down metabolism thereby decrease heart beat and pulse rate. The body cells use oxygen efficiently thereby increasing immunity. Our brain waves get regulated and reduced by the practice of pranayama and one becomes more aware of the thoughts. Pranayam increases our concentration power.

Pranayam technique

Pranayam comprises the following four stages of autosuggestion:

- 4.1 Poorak – Inhale omnipresent radiant prana while chanting '*Om Bhur Bhuvah Svah*'
- 4.2 Antar kumbhak – Hold the breath and absorb the omnipotent Prana in our solar plexus⁵ while chanting '*Tat Savitur Varenyam*'.
- 4.3 Rechak – Exhale and let the omniscient sun rays radiate from our solar plexus while purifying our body and mind while chanting '*Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi*'.
- 4.4 Bahir kumbhak – Hold the breath outside and expand our consciousness by radiating wisdom and love like the sun while chanting '*Dheeyo yonah prachodayat*'

Surya pranayam technique

Surya pranayam is a potent practice to absorb greater quantity of prana. By surya pranayam one is able to activate sushumna nadi for prolonged period of time and induce deep meditation. Surya pranayam incorporates the chanting of gayatri mantra mentally together with breath awareness and autosuggestion.

The sun represents pingala nadi and the flow of the breath through the right nostril. One inhales through the pingala nadi and exhales from the ida nadi. Thereafter, one inhales from the ida nadi and exhales from the pingala nadi. One must hold the breath at the end of each inhalation and exhalation for a convenient time. This is one round of surya pranayam.

⁵Solar plexus is the omnipotent sun within our body. It is the store house of prana and our life-force is radiated from there. Solar plexus is located behind the navel and is the central point of the human body. Doctors know that a child in mother's womb gets all the nourishment for growth and development through the umbilical chord connected to the solar plexus.

Solar plexus is also considered as the second brain of the body. Our 'gut feelings' arise from the solar plexus. By pranayam, one's solar plexus gets charged by the solar energy and one becomes radiant.

Padmasana

One should practice surya pranayam and surya dhyana in padmasana. Our body and mind are connected therefore steadiness of the body leads to one-pointed awareness of the mind.

One can sit still in padmasana over a long period of time comfortably to meditate. Padmasana automatically holds the body itself in a steady position, as one tends to lose body consciousness in deep state of meditation.

Padmasana technique

Sit with both legs extended forward.

Fold one leg and place its foot on the top of opposite thigh. The sole of the foot must be upwards and the heel should touch the pelvic bone.

Fold the other leg and place its foot on the top of the other thigh.

One should always keep the spine straight to ensure the generation, storage and distribution of prana in our solar plexus.

Daily practice of Surya pranayam

One should practice at least twelve rounds of surya pranayam everyday.

One can start with breath awareness in the beginning and gradually incorporate awareness of prana in solar plexus with gayatri mantra in the practice of surya pranayam.

Advance surya pranayam is practiced with eyes closed and one inhales mentally through alternative nostrils.

IV. Surya Dhyan

Dhyan is a Sanskrit word. 'Dhi' means intellect and 'Yan' means flight, movement or an activity. During surya dhyan our thought awareness flows towards the sun. This is the beginning of our evolutionary journey or yoga.

An ancient but very potent practice known as surya tratak or sun gazing is practiced to enter the state of dhyan. Surya tratak is concentration of our consciousness with total awareness and attention on the sun. Thereby, one is able to curb the oscillating tendencies of the mind. After that, the observed (sun, the object), observer (ourselves, the subject) and the observation process (tratak) are merged into one. Our ordinary consciousness is transformed into sun consciousness and one becomes the sun. Dhyan culminates into total absorption of the object by the subject and even the awareness is lost in the practice.

Surya tratak is a steady gazing without blinking the eyelid or moving the eyeballs by focusing the eyes and in turn the mind on the sun to the exclusion of all other thoughts. Sunlight imprints a clear picture of the sun in our mind and sun is visible clearly even after the eyes are closed as it captures our absolute attention.

The practice of surya tratak is divided into bahir tratak (outer gazing using our eyes) and antar tratak (inner gazing using our mind). Antar tratak is a powerful method of developing awareness of the deeper aspects of the mind and awakening its incredible potential.

Surya Tratak technique

Always sit in padmasana facing towards the sun⁶.

Be aware of the whole body and mind throughout the practice of surya tratak.

Use yogic breathing throughout the practice of surya tratak. Only breathe through the nose.

Chant gayatri mantra mentally with the breath awareness.

One should not wear glasses or lenses during surya tratak.

One should not move the eyelids and eyeballs. Generally, there is a tendency for the after image of the sun to move upwards, downwards or to the

sides. Therefore, try to steady the image of the sun.

Surya tratak comprises the following autosuggestion practice:

- 4.1 Poorak – Open your eyes and look into the sun while inhaling omnipresent radiant prana flowing from the sun to Bhrumadhya (the eyebrow centre) and further into Trikuti or Agya chakra (Pineal gland, located in the middle of our brain) in one continuous movement while chanting '*Om Bhur Bhuvah Svah*'
- 4.2 Antar kumbhak – Hold the breath and absorb the omnipotent prana into Trikuti or Agya chakra while chanting '*Tat Savitur Varenyam*'.
- 4.3 Rechak – Exhale and let the omniscient sun rays radiate from our Trikuti or Agya chakra while purifying and illuminating our mind while chanting '*Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi*'. Autosuggest as if all the neurons in our brain and the cells of our body are enlightened and active.
- 4.4 Bahir kumbhak – Hold the breath outside and expand our consciousness by radiating wisdom and love just like the sun while chanting '*Dheeyo yonah prachodayat*'.

One should practice surya tratak for twelve rounds of gayatri mantra with open eyes & additional twelve rounds with closed eyes. Use the autosuggestion during surya tratak.

After that bring the sun to the Trikuti or Agya chakra and drop the above autosuggestion. One pierces the aura or the exterior of the sun and enters the core of the sun to investigate the nature and the attributes of the sun as mentioned in the surya yog section of the book. At the end bring back the awareness to the eyebrow centre and open the eyes. One should stay quiet after the practice and be aware of all our thoughts. During this period of silence intuitive ideas & innovative thoughts manifest in the mind.

⁶One may practice tratak on a jyoti (flame of an oil lamp) if the outside weather is not conducive.

V. Daily Surya Yog practice

1. Go to the toilet, brush teeth and take a shower before surya yog.
2. Our body should be exposed to the sunlight.
3. One should sit in padmasana on a cotton mat.
4. Surya yog is practiced at the time of sunrise and before the sunset.
5. Try to do surya yog at the same time and at the same place while keeping the mind free of thoughts and with full enthusiasm.
6. Surya or sun is our guru.
7. One should always sit facing the sun.
8. One can change the legs in padmasana. But to perfect dhyana one should be immobile like a solid rock.
9. Surya yog is practiced barefoot.
10. Eat organic, vegetarian food to maintain purity of body and mind.

One's progression on the path of surya yoga can be known by his will, thought and action. One's aspirations will be oriented towards selflessness and universal good. By surya yog, our concentration and will power develops day by day. One develops a positive attitude and intelligence to deal with life in appropriate way.

Author



Madhukar Soni earned an MBA from London Business School and worked as an investment banker before retiring early to pursue research in surya yog.

Madhukar traveled and stayed in the Himalayas to practice surya yog and to observe its impact on our body and mind. Surya yog is a potent practice in the evolution of our consciousness and is also the key to all our health care and energy requirements.

Surya yog ebook is dedicated to the sun on Sunday, 21 June 2015, the 'International Day of Yoga' as declared by the United Nations. On this day and onward, a number of workshops will be conducted across the globe to spread the ancient practice of surya yog.

Ask on ask@suryayog.com for any questions and suggestions.
www.suryayog.com