

## The Practice of Yoga

*The Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali*, an ancient and foundational yoga text, identifies eight limbs of yoga.

### 1. Yama – the laws of life or right living with others



Ahimsa	Satya	Asteya	Brahmacharya	Aparigraha
Nonviolence; Compassion	Truthfulness; Authenticity	Nonstealing; Service to creation	Nonexcess; Awareness of God in all our actions	Nonpossessiveness; letting go

### 2. Niyama – the rules for living or right living with our inner minds and thoughts

Saucha	Santoshā	Tapas	Svādhyāya	Ishvara Pranidhana
Purity (purify body, thoughts, and words); be purely available for each moment	Contentment; Gratitude and Appreciation for the moment	Self-Discipline; Make choices that support the you that you want to become	Self-Study; Release ego and embrace the truth of your divine self	Surrender; Actively placing yourself at the feet of God

### 3. Asana – the physical postures

Physical postures should be steady and provide a sense of ease while discovering your body and inner self.

Yoga classes	Sun Salutation – for building energy	Moon Salutation – for invoking calmness
a. Find a local yoga studio and sign up for a class. b. Take an online yoga class <a href="https://www.mindbodyonline.com/explore/fitness/search/classes-online">https://www.mindbodyonline.com/explore/fitness/search/classes-online</a> <a href="https://theunderbelly.com/classes/">https://theunderbelly.com/classes/</a> c. Free videos online <a href="https://do.yogawithadriene.com/">https://do.yogawithadriene.com/</a>	 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP9DIBgiZ1o">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wP9DIBgiZ1o</a>	 <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-QxVyp86U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-QxVyp86U</a>

### 4. Pranayama – the breathing exercises

- a. **Calming Breath** (Counts: 4:2:4, 6:3:6, 8:4:8, and so on)

One round using 6:3:6 – Inhale for count of six. Hold breath for count of 3. Exhale for count of 6. Do more rounds using the same count.

- b. **15- minute Pranayama Practice** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoDKbXEUrvQ>

### 5. Pratyahara – The Retirement of the Senses

Letting go of all things external and notice yourself (e.g. sensations in your body, feelings, spirit).

### 6. Dharana – Steadiness of the mind

Mental focus and concentration. Practice trataka by steadying your gaze on a flower, candle flame, something in nature, or an object. Then close eyes and mentally imagine and focus on the same item for a length of time.

### 7. Dhyana - Meditation

- a. Focus on breath, particularly a sensation of the breath (e.g. the air as it enters and exits the nostrils or contraction and expansion of the belly)

- b. Loving-kindness meditation - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sz7cpV7ERsM>

### 8. Samadhi – the settled mind

Unity with God. Transcendent state of being.

### Resources

- Adele, Deborah. *The Yamas and Niyamas: Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice*. Duluth: On-Word Bound Books, 2009.
- Maurine, Camille and Roche, Lorin. *Meditation Secrets for Women: Discovering Your Passion, Pleasure, and Inner Peace*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2001.
- Salzberg, Sharon. *Real Love: The Art of Mindful Connection*. London: Bluebird, 2017.
- Stanley, Jassamyn. *Every Body Yoga: Let Go of Fear, Get on The Mat, and Love Your Body*. New York: Workman Publishing, 2017.
- Stanley, Tracee. *Radiant Rest: Yoga Nidra for Deep Relaxation and Awakened Clarity*. Boulder: Shambhala, 2021.
- Payler, Diane. *Yin Yoga: Essential Poses and Sequences for Balanced Energy*. Emeryville: Rockridge Press, 2020.