

Ashtanga Immersion



Teacher Training

Immersion ~ Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga versus Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga

There is a distinction between “Ashtanga Yoga” (the eight limb path as defined by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras) and “Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga” (the asana system defined in the modern day by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, handed down from Sri T. Krishnamacharya). The “history” of ashtanga yoga, the eight limb path is thousands and thousands of years old. Patanjali codified this system in the Yoga Sutras and Vyasa helped us interpret Patanjali’s writings with his commentaries that are now considered a part of the yoga sutras.

The ashtanga vinyasa yoga system has undergone many changes and modifications across generations. The teachings were traditionally handed down from guru to disciple and made to fit the needs of the student. BKS Iyengar and Sri. K. Pattabhi Jois and Indra Devi all received direct instruction from Sri. T. Krishnamacharya, but because of their individual needs as students, the systems they teach appear different. They each teach as they were taught.

Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga Overview

The Primary series of Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga is known as “Yoga Chikitsa” or “Yoga Therapy”. Is it a healing sequence of poses known for their cleansing and toning of the Kanda of the body, the lower back, sacrum, hips, waist and solar plexus area. The sequence of poses is always the same, with most postures held for 5 or more breaths. Vinyasas between postures are used to maintain heat in the body, build strength in the practitioner and to clear the nervous system of the previous posture, preparing for the next posture in the sequence. The emphasis is placed on a steady breathing pattern with an audible breath. The idea being that focusing inward on the breath makes use of the outer senses impossible, thereby transporting the mind of the practitioner into a state of Pratyhara (sense withdrawal). The practitioner is encouraged to memorize the sequence over time so that more focus can be placed on breath, bandhas and drishtis and less on what comes next - thereby making the practice gradually deeper and deeper.

The Most Fundamental Pranayama in Yoga

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Refine your Sun Salutations and Alignment (Tips for Deeper Strength; How to Save your Shoulder Joints)

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Ashtanga “Jump Throughs” (Jump Forward, Jump Back, Jump Through, Use of Smaller Muscle Groups)

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Ashtanga ~ The Original Yoga Sequence that Inspires Today's Power Yoga and Vinyasa Yoga

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Bandhas (part of the inner body) in Ashtanga Yoga

When attention is drawn away from the core to the surface of the body, it becomes more challenging to concentrate and engage the bandhas.

- Outer body - Muscles we use to initiate movement.
- Inner body - Muscles close to the core of the body that engage to prepare for movement before movement actually occurs. They engage at the thought of movement.

Bandhas are locks that help you accumulate and then direct prana appropriately. They are conscious actions deep within the core of the body that help support the outer body. They can even be viewed as types of Marma Therapy for the doshas. The three main bandhas are:

- **Jalandhara Bandha - “net or web”** - This bandha regulates the flow of blood and prana to the glands in the neck and the brain for protection of those areas. Just as a net full of live fish holds in nearly all of the fish.... Prana also is held within the “net” of this bandha. The chin is placed within the notch at the base of the throat. This position of the neck can be mastered during sarvangasana (shoulderstand). It is not frequently used during asana practice, though it occurs naturally in postures like shoulderstand (sarvangasana), plow (halasana) and embryo pose (pindasana). It is used extensively during pranayama. This bandha helps stimulate marmas in both the front and back of the neck and is used to pacify the guna of rajas and to balance kapha dosha.
- **Uddiyana Bandha - “flying up”** - (Not to be confused with “uddiyana” as in kappalabhati breath or as it is used during asana.) This bandha forces prana to fly up through the sushumna nadi (spinal column) which is the main channel for energy within the nervous system. As prana moves up with energy of mula bandha and uddiyana bandha together, it reaches the heart chakra and stimulates greater spiritual awareness, philosophical attitudes and a higher life pattern. It is only to be performed during kumbhaka (retention of breath during pranayama) following rechaka (emptying of the lungs). That is....it should be performed only after full exhalation and released before the next inhalation. The muscles of the abdomen/diaphragm are pulled up and in and then held against the spine along with the internal organs. This bandha helps regulate Pitta dosha and keeps agni healthy.
- **Mula Bandha - “root or source”** - This bandha forces up apana vayu (vital air that controls functions of elimination and birth) to unite with prana vayu (vital air which pervades the body) which has its seat in the chest (on the right side of the heart muscle); this increases feelings of love and compassion in the practitioner. Mula bandha also prevents prana vayu from simply descending and becoming scattered. The regular practice of mula bandha helps dissipate heavy emotionality and cravings and helps increase memory capacity because it settles the mind. A scattered mind scatters prana. This bandha should be practiced during the following asanas when possible : tadasana (mountain), sirsasana (headstand), sarvangasana (shoulderstand), urdhva dhanurasana (upward facing wheel), ustrasana (camel), and paschimottanasana (forward fold). It is later practiced during kumbhaka (breath retention). In its most basic form, it is like practicing the kegel technique for women (but more subtle) and like the lifting of the perineum for men. With practice it becomes possible to hold this bandha for the duration of an asana practice. This bandha balances Vata dosha.

The practice of bandhas helps transform one’s inner view from bhoga to bhakti. It takes one’s focus from worldly pleasures (bhoga) to devotion and adoration of the divine (bhakti).

What is “bhoga yoga” vs. “yoga yoga” in the current climate of yoga practice.

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Breath

The breath (Ujjayi or victorious breath) is the heart of the Ashtanga discipline and links asana to asana in a precise order. By synchronizing movement with breathing and practicing Mula and Uddiyana Bandhas (locks), an intense internal heat or fire (agni) is produced.

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Drishti

“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters in the end.”

-Ursula K. LeGuin

Drishti refers to your gazing point. In Ashtanga, each posture has a drishti that helps you fix your gaze on something, focus and increase concentration. Drishti is more than just looking at something. When you gaze you let go of a tight focal point. You are looking without seeing the focal point itself; you are fixing your eyes in order to turn your attention more deeply inward. You thereby shift into a new dimension that includes more than the physical body. Drishti is a practice of dharana (concentration). It is one of the means for gathering prana into the body. Where you place your drishti can also influence the flow of prana through the marmas, especially when you either turn the head and/or the eyes. The nine traditional points of drishti in Ashtanga yoga include the nose (or beyond the nose), naval, third eye, hands, thumbs, toes, sky, far right and far left. <http://www.ashtanga-vinyasa-yoga.co.uk/Drishti.html>

“Anyone who has practiced in front of a mirror may have noticed how looking into it (the mirror) draws awareness away from the core toward the surface (of the body). Exactly this happens to the flow of prana..... it is preferable to develop proprioceptive awareness - awareness that does not depend on visual cues.”

-Gregor Maehle

Withdrawal

Withdrawal or Pratyhara is the limb of yoga wherein the senses are brought under control and the practitioner undergoes deep self-examination. Desikachar says, “What is meant by pratyhara is that I create a situation in which my mind is so absorbed in something that the senses no longer respond to other objects.” Pratyhara can be a means for controlling physical discomfort by directing the attention elsewhere, like to the breath or to an intention or a mantra.

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"Gateway Poses" of Ashtanga

- Gateway poses can be used to measure progress
- Each posture in the series is a gateway to the next one. Students must be able to do previous postures in the series before attempting more difficult asanas.
- Certain poses within the first series are also considered gateways to progress towards the second series including **Parsvokonasana** (revolved side angle with a prayer twist, back foot must be flat and hand placed on floor outside of front foot), **Kurmasanas** (Tortoise Pose), **Jahu Sirsasana** (Head-to-Knee Forward Bend on toes with heel pressing into groin)
- Confidence in gateway poses indicates an ability to progress to the intermediate series.

Approximating Postures Rather than Modifying Postures

- Approximating rather than modifying postures can allow for more rapid advancement
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How Outer Practices Influence and Deepen Internal Practices

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Ashtanga Yoga Introduction

SURYA NAMASCARA A

1 ekam inhale	6 sat exhale
2 dve exhale	7 sapta inhale
3 trini inhale	8 astau exhale
4 catvari exhale	9 nava inhale
5 pance inhale	Samasthitih

SURYA NAMASCARA B

1 ekam inhale	10 dasa exhale
2 dve exhale	11 ekadasa inhale
3 trini inhale	12 dvadasa exhale
4 catvari exhale	13 trayodasa inhale
5 panca inhale	14 caturdasa exhale
6 sat exhale	15 pancadasa inhale
7 sapta inhale	16 sodasa exhale
8 astau exhale	17 saptadasa inhale
9 nava inhale	Samasthitih

DRISHTIS

Nose	nasagrai
Third Eye	broomadhya
Naval	nabi chakra
Hand	Hastagrai
Toes	Padhayoragrai
Side	parsva drishti
Thumbs	angusta ma dyai
Upward	urdhva drishti or antara drishti

BANDHAS

Mulabandha
Uddiyana Bandha
Jalandhara Bandha

EIGHT LIMBS = ASHTANGA

1. Yama moral restraints (how to behave in society) - outer
2. Niyama the personal disciplines (your private practices) - outer
3. Asana physical postures - outer
4. Pranayama controlling the breath - outer
5. Pratyahara Sense withdrawal * - outer
6. Dharana intense focus, concentration - inner
7. Dhyana meditation - inner
8. Samadhi Bliss, Joy, Peace - inner

Krishnamacharya (the guru of Sri Krishna Pattabhi Jois, BKS Iyengar and Indra Devi) developed the Ashtanga Yoga series when he was called upon to teach young teenage boys. The physical yoga series was developed to keep them busy, focused and to develop strength and stamina. Keep this in mind if you ever feel overwhelmed by the nature of the postures. Progress comes with regular practice. It is primarily for the purification of the “Kanda” (means “bulbous root”) of the body. The Kanda is the source and meeting place of the nadis; located 3 fingers distance below navel (below Manipura Chakra) and above pelvic floor.

Ashtanga is like the classical ballet of yoga while Western “Vinyasa” and “Power Yoga” are the free-form, modern dance of yoga. Ashtanga Yoga is Vinyasa yoga – it is the marriage of breath and movement. Each asana is linked with the next via breath and movement.

Primary Series of Ashtanga works, balances and purifies the qualities of the first and second chakras and develops qualities of the 3rd chakra. It is called “yoga chikitsa” or “yoga therapy”. Primary series is all about forward folds that become progressively deeper – hip openings and low back openings. The postures balance the seat of emotions – to either gain more control over emotions or to better free up emotions.....depending upon the needs of the practitioner.

Intermediate series of Ashtanga focuses on backbends, back strengtheners and heart openers, going progressively deeper. It is called “nerve cleansing” because it cleanses the spine, the nerve center of the physical and energetic body. Intermediate series works with/after development of the foundation of primary series and moves prana further up, cleansing and purifying the qualities of the third and fourth chakras.

Ashtanga requires you to work in the present. You must count your own breaths. You must be able to follow the prescribed sequence – if your mind wanders, you will become lost. Because each movement has a prescribed breath, there is no time for fussy adjustments to your practice. You must go directly into the posture and breath in that posture, wherever it takes you. The physical depth of each posture is not as important (in the beginning) as the breath and the continuous flow of the practice – the vinyasa!

You get into the pose, stay in the pose, breathe and allow prana to do the work for you. You will see results in your practice quickly, if your practice is regular. Improvement is very noticeable because the sequence never changes, the asanas never change - YOU change.

The Eight Limbs of Yoga

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyhara, Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi

Pratyhara ~ Pratyhara translates as “to withdraw oneself from that which nourishes the senses”. This is the limb of yoga wherein the senses are brought under control and the practitioner undergoes deep self-examination. Desikachar says, “What is meant by pratyhara is that I create a situation in which my mind is so absorbed in something that the senses no longer respond to other objects.” It is not the use of willpower to make a decision. Pratyhara can be a means for controlling physical discomfort by directing the attention elsewhere, like to the breath or to an intention or a mantra.

Dharana ~ Dharana means “to hold”. This is the limb of yoga that is born from pratyhara. Once the body is controlled through asana, the breath controlled through pranayama, the senses controlled through pratyhara, then dharana (complete absorption) can be achieved. Dharana means to hold one’s focus on just one object and be absorbed in the focus on that object. Single-pointed focus on the Divine, the Creator, brings union with God. Dharana is just one step away from meditation.

Dhyana ~ Dhyana is meditation. Dharana is the contact with an object, created within the mind, and Dhyana is the connection and communion created with that object. “As water takes the shape of its container, the mind when it contemplates an object is transformed into the shape of that object.” When one focuses upon God, then one’s mind becomes like God - illuminated, all loving, and all compassionate. One thereby becomes a light unto himself and to all others. The signs of progress in this limb are physical lightness, inner steadiness, a beautiful voice, a balanced, tranquil mind, and the very essence of humility. This practitioner dedicates all actions to God and takes refuge in God and guru.

Samadhi ~ Samadhi means “to bring together, to merge”. The final limb - the end of the yogic path - total bliss. In samadhi, all distinction of “I”, one’s personal identity (name, profession, family, etc) disappears as one becomes completely at one with the object of meditation.

Samyama ~ “Sam” means “together” and “yama” means “discipline”. When dharana, dhyana and samadhi are all concentrated on one object, then samyama occurs. It is said that samyama releases supernatural powers, but that is just a side effect of the practice. It should never be the goal. The goal of samyama is to concentrate on one object and to know everything about it....to become one with it.

The Legend of Patanjali from Hindu Mythology

“Lord Shiva once gave a discourse on yoga to his consort, Uma. Because it was highly secret, a remote jungle location was chosen for the occasion. Shiva had just finished his discourse when he heard a noise in the shrubs. On investigation he found the thousand-headed serpent of infinity, Ananta, trying to get away. Shiva apprehended Ananta and told him that, as punishment for secretly listening, he was sentenced to go to the humans and impart to them his new knowledge.

Setting out immediately on his new task, Ananta approached a village. As soon as they saw the thousand-headed serpent, some villagers ran away in horror while others started hurling stones at him. When Ananta went back to Lord Shiva and told him what had happened, Shiva explained that humans would be frightened by the appearance of a thousand-headed serpent, and suggested he take on human form. Following this advice, and having taken the name Patanjali, Ananta was readily accepted by humans. Because he is seen as a manifestation of the serpent of infinity, Patanjali is traditionally depicted as being half-human, half-snake.



Ananta himself is seen as the perfect yogi. One of his jobs is to provide a bed for Lord Vishnu. Vishnu can be incredibly heavy at times, so the bed needs to be very strong. At the same time, a very soft bed needs to be provided for the Lord. For the dual task, Ananta was very well-suited, his coils being soft and strong simultaneously.” ~Excerpt from Ashtanga Yoga Practice and Philosophy by Gregor Miehle page 134



Ananta exemplifies Yoga Sutra II.46: Sthira sukham asanam (the posture must be firm and soft)

Traditional Ashtanga Mantras

A Mantra (Devanāgarī मन्त्र), which originated in the Vedic tradition of India, is a sound, syllable, word, or group of words that are considered capable of "creating transformation" (spiritual transformation). Their use and type varies according to the school and philosophy associated with the mantra.

Ashtanga Commencing Mantra

Om Saha nau vavatu
Saha nau bhunaktu
Saha veeryam kara vavahai
Tejasvina vadhetam astu ma vidvisha -vahai-ii
Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi

English Translation:

May we be protected
May we be nourished
May we work together uniting our strength
May our wisdom be luminous
May our relationship be always harmonious
May there be peace peace perfect peace

Ashtanga Closing Mantra

OM
SWASTHI PRAJABYJHAM PARIPALAYANTAM
JNAYENA MARGENA MAHIM MAHIMSHAM
GO BRAHMANEBHYAH SHUBHAMASTU NITYAM
LOKHA SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAVANTU
SARVE JANA SUKHINO BHAVANTU
SAMASTA SANMANGALINI SANTU
MOKSHAKARYANA SAMVRIDI RASTU
VISHVA SHANTI RASTU
OM Shanti Shanti Shaniti-hi

English Translation:

Om
May prosperity be glorified
May administrators rule the world with law and justice
May all things sacred be protected
May all in the world be happy and free
In all births may there be happiness
May auspiciousness be everywhere
Let blessed liberation increase for all
Let there be peace everywhere
Om

Ashtanga Yoga Mantra

OM
VANDE GURUNAM CHARANARAVINDE
SANDARSITA SVATMASUKHAVA BODHE
NIHSHREYASE JANGALIKAYAMANE
SAMSARA HALAHALA MOHASHANTYAI
ABAHU PURUSHAKARAM
SHANKHACHAKRASI DHARINAM
SAHASRA SHIRASAM SHVETAM
PRANAMAMI PATANJALIM

OM

English Translation:

Om
I bow to the lotus feet of the guru
Who awakens insight into the happiness of pure being
Who is the refuge, the jungle physician
Who eliminates the delusion caused by
The poisonous herb of samsara (conditioned existence)
I prostrate before the sage Patanjali
Who has thousands of radiant white heads
(in his form as the divine serpent, Ananda)
And who has, as far as his arms, assumed the form of a man
Holding a conch shell (divine sound), a wheel (circle of light representing infinite time)
and sword (discrimination)

Om

Arati Guru Mantra

Om
Guru Brahma
Guru Vishnu
Guru Devo Maheswarah
Guru Sakshat
Param Brahma
Tasmai Shri Gurave Namaha

English Translation:

Om
Teacher who is the Creator (God, parents)
Teacher who is the preserver (present experiences, daily life)
Teacher who brings transformation (difficulties, suffering)
The teacher nearby (outer teacher who helps you discover the inner Self)
Teacher beyond all form (God)
I surrender all my efforts to my teacher

Also translated as:

The guru creates
The guru preserves
The Guru dissolves the universe.
The Guru, in fact, is the Absolute.
Salutations to the Satguru.

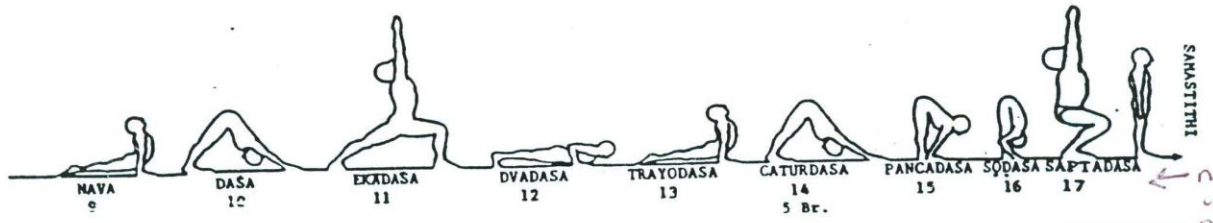
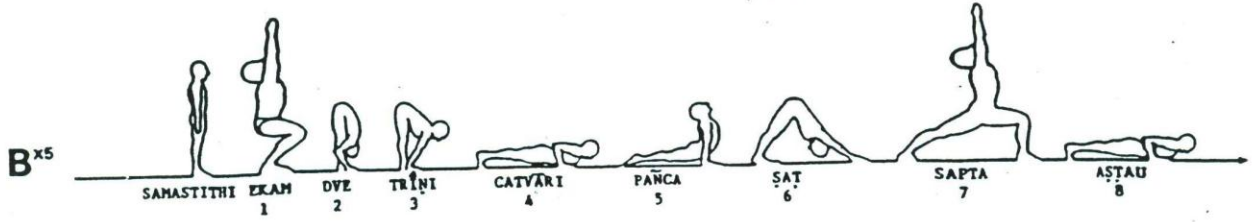
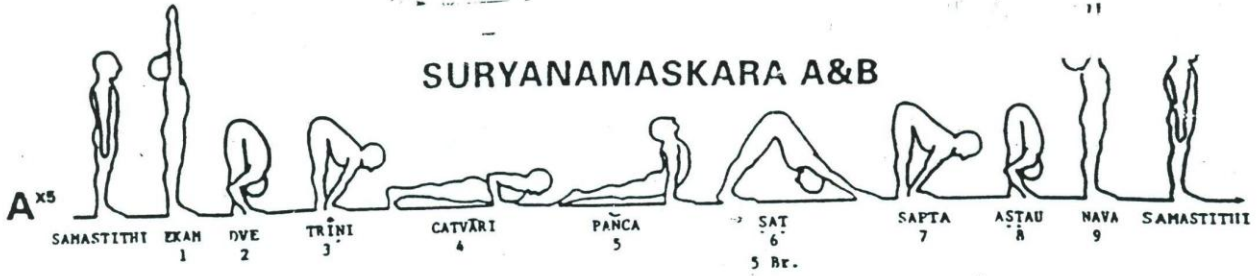
This chant is believed to be an invocation to the teacher within ourselves to notice and recognize all the people and situations (positive and negative) that give us opportunities for growth and Self-realization. Everything you need to become a better person is already present in your daily life and within yourself. You simply have to wake up to you who really are - a divine instrument of God.

Documented Acceleration of Asana Throughout History

- Hatha Yoga Pradipika (15th Century) - 20-25 asanas for kundalini awakening
- Gheranda Samhita (later in 15th Century) - 74 asanas
- Shiva Samhita (17th Century) - 108 asanas
- Krishnamacharya (early 20th Century) - Brings concept of vinyasas (moving with breath) and bandhas (in asana) from the Himalayas where he studied under his Guru, Sri Mahana Brahmacharya. Krishnamacharya is considered the founder of the Vinyasa Method. Most yoga practiced in the United States has evolved from Krishnamacharya. Krishnamacharya's teachings gave rise to the Ashtanga Vinyasa Method, the Iyengar Method, and the Indra Devi Style (Guru to Baron Baptiste's Parents). Pattabhi Jois became the holder of the Ashtanga Vinyasa Lineage (Guru to Sharon Gannon/David Life of Jivamukti)...now held by Sharath Rangaswamy.
- Light on Yoga by Iyengar (1966) - Over 591 asanas. The Iyengar Method has given rise to other modern practices such as Anusara Yoga. John Friend took the alignment principles of Iyengar and created the "Universal Principles of Alignment"TM and melded these with Tantric Philosophy in the creation of Anusara[®] Yoga.
- Asana Poster by Dharma Mittra (1984) - 908 asanas done in devotion to his Guru, Sri Swami Kailashananda Maharaj. Dharma Mittra's style of yoga is based on Hatha Yoga and the Shiva Namaskara Series developed by Dharma Mittra.

ASTANGA YOGA
AS TAUGHT BY SHRI K PATTABHI JOIS
Mysore 1993
Illustrated by JOHN SCOTT

SURYANAMASKARA A&B



← names of number in SANSKRIT

Chakras heat

ASTANGA YOGA
AS TAUGHT BY SHRI K PATTABHI JOIS
Mysore 1993
Illustrated by JOHN SCOTT

STANDING ASANAS



Warm up

Advanced Series A

Viśvamṛtasana
Vasiṣṭhāsana
Kasyapāsana
Cakorāsana
Bhairavāsana
Skandāsana
Durvasāsana
Ūrdhva Kukkuṭāsana A, B & C
Galavāsana
Ekapāda Bakāsana A & B
Koundinyāsana A & B
Aṣṭavakrāsana A & B
Pūrṇa Matsyendrāsana
Viranchyāsana A & B
Dvipāda Viparita Daṇḍāsana
Ekapāda Viparita Daṇḍāsana

Supta Trivikramāsana
Hanumanāsana
Dikāsana
Utthita Trivikramāsana
Natarājāsana
Rājakapotāsana
Ekapāda Rājakapotāsana

Advanced Series B

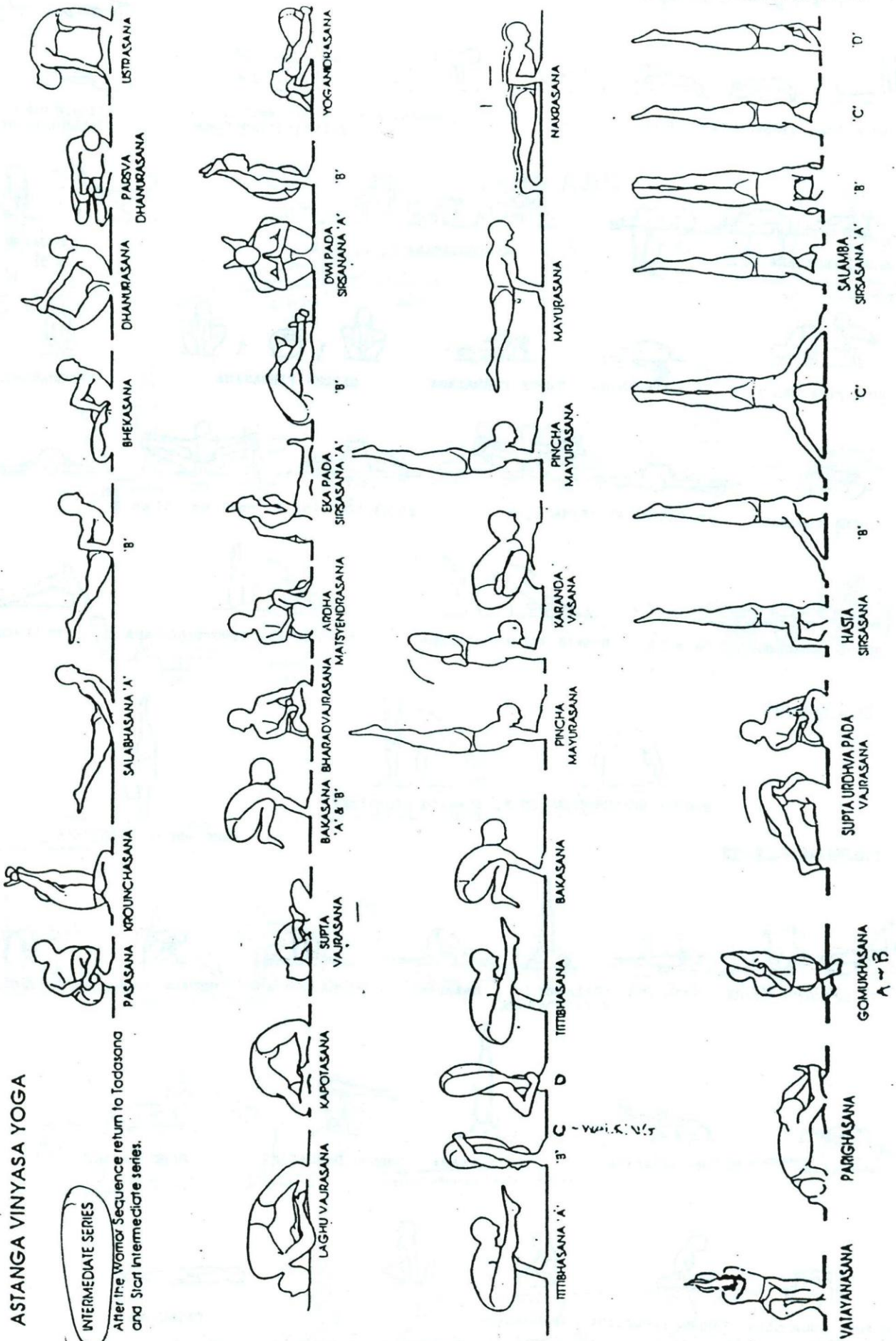
Mūlabandhāsana
Nāhuṣāsana
Vṛṣchikāsana
Śayanāsana
Buddhāsana A & B
Kapilāsana
Akarṇa Dhanurāsana
Padanguṣṭha Dhanurāsana
Marichyāsana E,F,G & H
Tadāsana
Samanāsana
Parśva Bakāsana
Punga Kukkuṭāsana
Eka Pāda Dhanurāsana
Eka Pāda Kapotāsana
Paryankāsana A & B
Parivṛttāsana A & B
Yogadaṇḍāsana
Yonidaṇḍāsana
Bhuja Daṇḍāsana
Parśva Daṇḍāsana
Ūrdhva Daṇḍāsana
Adho Daṇḍāsana
Samakoṇāsana
Omkarāsana

CHATWARI 1/ STRAIGHT BACK FOR 20 SERIES

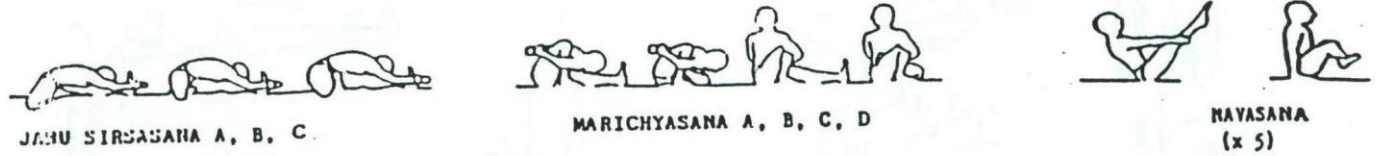
ASTANGA VINYASA YOGA

INTERMEDIATE SERIES

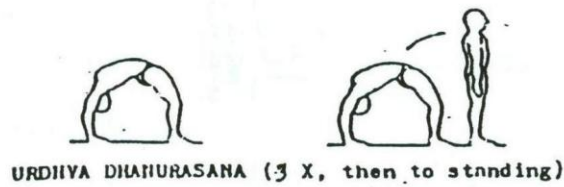
After the Warrior Sequence return to Tadasana and Start Intermediate series.



Yoga Club Teacher Training Manual | Ashtanga Yoga



BACK BENDING



FINISHING POSTURES

