

CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN YOGIC CULTURE



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THE PURPOSE OF SURYA NAMASKARA

- * The purpose of the Study 'Surya Namaskara' helps us to achieve mental, emotional and physical balance. It improves physical as well as mental fitness, promotes relaxation, and reduces stress, anxiety, depression and free from all negative feelings. It also helps to develop our spirituality and inner power.

IMPORTANCE OF SURYA NAMASKARA

- * Surya Namaskara or sun salutation literally means salute the sun. It finds its roots of worship of Surya, the god surya Narayan. The series of activities and poses can be practiced as a physical exercise or a complete sadhana which incorporates exercise postures, breathing exercises and profound meditation. When we expend little bit time and looking for a single attempt to stay fit, then the only answer: a sequence of 12 powerful yoga asanas (postures) that provide a good cardiovascular workout in the form of Surya Namaskar. Surya Namaskars are a good way to keep the body in shape and the mind calm and healthy. It improves our concentration and reduces all negative feelings. Regular practice of suryanamaskara makes the spine and waist more flexible and strengthens and toning the muscles of different parts of the body. It improves all physiological system of regular practitioners.
- * Surya Namaskar is best done early morning during the sun rise with an empty stomach. Each round of Sun Salutation consists of two sets, and each set is composed of 12 yoga poses. You might find several versions from several books on how to practice Sun Salutation. But I think, it is best to stick to one particular version and practice it regularly for best results.

PROCEDURES OF SURYA NAMASKARA

- * Surya Namaskar provides an opportunity to express gratitude to the sun for sustaining life on this planet, For the next 10 days, start our day with a feeling of grace and gratitude towards the sun energy. Do twelve round sun salutation, followed by other yoga poses and then rest deeply in yoga nidra. We might just find that this could be our mantra to stay fit, happy and peaceful throughout the day.

PRAYER FOR SURYA NAMASKARA

- * At first we stand erect and fold the hand with namaskara mudra, and prayer for God Surya Narayan:
- * “Hiranmayena Patrena Satya-Syapi-Hitam Mukham
Tattvam-Pusanna-Pavnu Satya-
Dharmaya Drastave”- Isha Upanishad
- * That means,
- * “Truth lies concealed by golden vessel.
Do thou o Sun
Open the entrance of that cover
So as the Truth you so concealed
Be visible to me,
A devotee, who by nature is truthful,
In the light of your illuminating grace.”

* Then we should practice twelve postures of Surya Namaskara one by one and before practice every posture, we salute different name to God Surya with chants (mantras) following:

- * 1. Om Mitraaya namahaa
- * 2. Om Ravaye namahaa
- * 3. Om Suryaaya namaha
- * 4. Om Bhaanave namahaa
- * 5. Om Khagaaya namahaa
- * 6. Om Pushane namahaa
- * 7. Om Hiranyagarbhaaya namahaa
- * 8. Om Marichye namahaa
- * 9. Om Aadityaaya namahaa
- * 10. Om Savitre namahaa
- * 11. Om Akaarye namahaa
- * 12. Om Bhaaskaraay anamahaa

BREATHING PRACTICE (RESPIRATION) SHOULD BE DONE DURING A SURYA NAMASKAR

- * Purak – Taking in a long breath.
- * Rechak – Leaving out a long breath.
- * Kumbhak – Holding the breath.
- * Aantar Kumbhak – Holding the breath after breathing in.
- * Bahir Kumbhak – Holding the breath after breathing out.
- * During every step we have to do the ‘purak’ and rechak breathing steps alternately. Eg. Step 2- purak, Step 3- rechak- Step 4 – purak and so on.

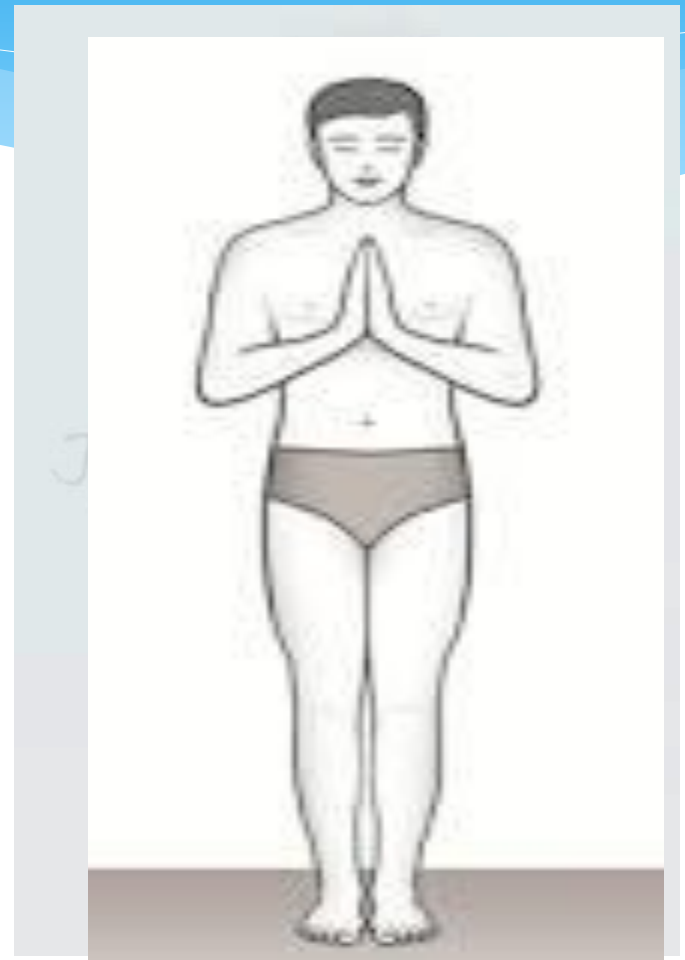
PRACTICE: TWELVE POSTURES OF SURYA NAMASKARA

- * Start the Surya Namaskaras by standing at the edge of a mat. Keep the feet together, and make sure that the weight is equally balanced on both the feet. We must now relax our shoulders and expand our chest. Inhale and lift both arms up. Then, exhale, and bring palms in front of our chest in a prayer position. There are twelve steps or positions that make a Surya Namaskar. Every step in Surya Namaskar is a different yoga position. To get the maximum benefit of Surya Namaskar hold stable in every position for at least 10 to 15 seconds. Try to practice twelve times in each schedule. **Twelve steps or postures are following:**

Posture- 1

Prarthanasana or Pranamasana or Namaskara Mudra:

- * Both feet touching each other, both hands joined at the centre of the chest as in prayer position back and neck straight and look straight.
- * Breathing : Kumbhak
- * Benefit : Helps maintain the physical and mental balance of the body.



Posture- 2

Hastauttanasana:

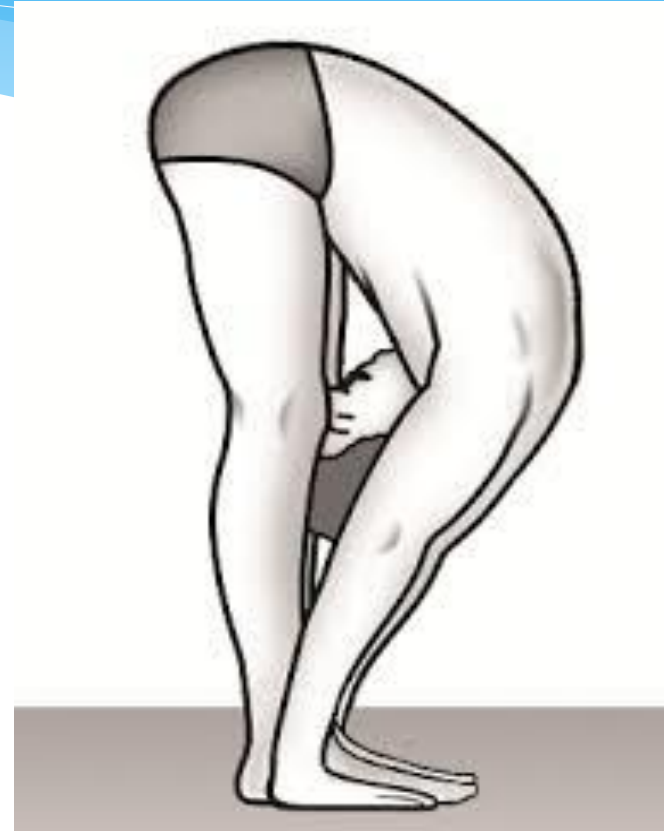
- * Continuing from the first position take hands straight up above the head and bend slightly backwards to stretch back. Keep hands in prayer position (without bending elbows). Keep neck between arms and looking upwards bending slightly backwards from the waist.
- * **Breathing:** Purak (While going from Position 1 to 2 slowly, start taking long breaths)
- * **Benefit :** Strengthens chest muscles which in turn help in breathing.



Posture- 3

Hasta Padasana (Hand to Foot pose)

- * Continuing from 2nd position take hands from above the head bending in the front and place hands beside feet on both sides. Keep our knees straight and try to touch the head to our knees.
- * Breathing : Rechak (Leave your breath slowly while going from Position 2 to 3)
- * Benefit : Makes the waist and spine flexible. It strengthens the muscles and is beneficial for the functioning of the liver.



Posture- 4

AshwaSanchalanasana (Equestrian pose)

- * From the 3rd position start sitting down and take one leg backwards in full stretching position, both hands resting on the ground on either sides of the front leg. The other leg should be bent at the knee. Put the chest weight on the front knee, eyes should be looking slightly upwards.
- * Breathing : Purak
- * Benefit : Strengthens the leg muscles and makes the spine and neck muscles flexible.



Posture- 5

Chaturang Dandasana(Stick pose)

- * Now slowly take the second leg back and beside the first. Keep the legs in line with the knees. The whole body weight should rest on the palms and toes. The foot, waist and head should be in a straight line. Look ahead towards the ground (This is also called Chaturang Dandasana because the body rests on the toes and palms)
- * Breathing : Rechak
- * Benefit : Strengthens the arms and maintains body posture.



Posture- 6

Ashtanga Namaskara (Salute With Eight Parts Or Points)

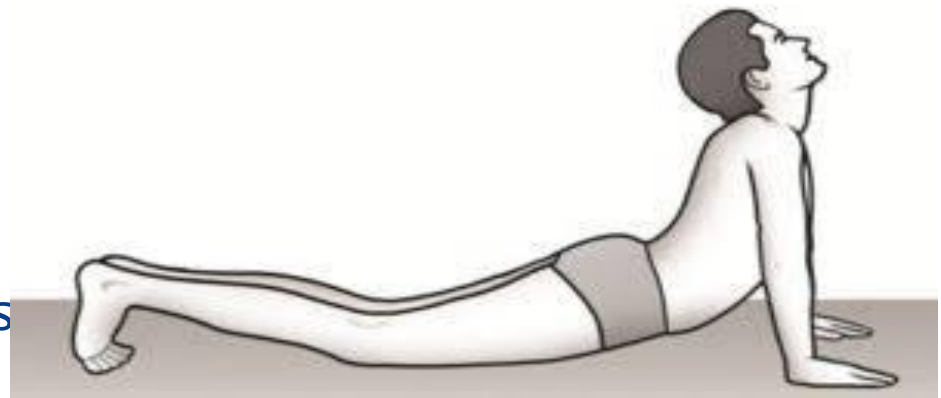
- * Lower the chest towards the ground bending both arms at the elbows. The following eight organs should touch the ground, forehead, chest, both palms, both knees and both toes. (Because eight body parts touch the ground it is called Ashtangasan)
- * Breathing : Kumbhak (Bahirkumbhak)
- * Benefit : Makes the spine and waist flexible and strengthens the muscles.



Posture- 7

Bhujangasan :

- * Now lift the body above the waist, bending it slightly backwards and looking backwards. Make sure our legs and thighs are touching the ground and back is in a semi-circular position.
- * Breathing : Purak
- * Benefit : Makes the spine and waist flexible and strengthens the muscles.
(Positions 5, 6 and 7 together, strengthen the arms and reduce the fat around the abdomen and waist.)



Posture- 8

Parvatasana (Downward Facing Dog pose):

- * Now lift the waist upwards and arms fully stretched with hands and legs resting on the ground, try to touch the chin to the chest.
- * Breathing : Rechak
- * Benefit : Beneficial for spine and waist muscles.



Posture- 9

AshwaSanchalanasana (Equestrian pose):

- * Same as the 4th position with the opposite leg behind.
- * Breathing : Purak



Posture- 10

Hasta Padasana (Hand to Foot pose)

- * Same as that in the 3rd position.
- * Breathing : Rechak



Posture-11

Hastauttanasana

- * Same as that in the 2nd position.
- * Breathing : Purak



Posture-12

Prarthanasana or Pranamasana or Namaskara Mudra:

- * After that slowly come back to Position 1. Now one Surya Namaskar is over.



BENEFITS OF SURYA NAMASKARA

1. Benefit of Surya Namaskar is that it strengthens the entire body.
2. It relieves constipation and promotes healthy digestion.
3. It stimulates the nervous system including the brain, lower plexus, spinal cord, etc. Surya Namaskar Yoga strongly aids in preventing memory loss, builds focus and concentration, improves the functioning of the brain. Activates Brain cells in the body.
4. It is a well known remedy to cure blood pressure and strengthens heart muscles. It also cures irregular heart beat.
5. It improves the capacity of the lungs, stimulates oxygen supply and regulates it to all the vital organs in the body.
6. It highly beneficial for improving blood circulation. It also provides beautiful glow to the skin.
7. Regular Practice of Surya Namaskara promotes weight loss and activates basal metabolic rate of a person's body.
8. It helps for managing menstrual cramps and, also helpful in managing menopause stage. Due to its empowering effects on the uterus of a woman, Surya Namaskar Yoga also helps in making child birth comparatively easier.
9. Surya Namaskara improves sexual functions of the body. Eradicates any internal flaws related to malfunctioning of sexual glands. Also, promotes healthy sexual appetite in a person.
10. It reduces strained joints problems. Lubricates sore muscles and joints and promotes their healthy functioning. Highly beneficial in managing arthritis, sciatica, other joint related ailments etc.
11. It improves mental and physical balance of the person's body. Develops patience and builds stamina by increasing the mental capacity of the brain and the body.
12. It Improves flexibility of the body and releases stiffness. Removes low back pain. Most of all, it fills you up with magnanimous positive energy. You feel rejuvenated and alive.

Surya Namaskar Yoga comes with numerous benefits. The above mentioned ones are a mere fraction of its long list of prerogatives. Imbibe Surya Namaskar Yoga Asanas into your daily life and, live a healthy life – preserve the beautiful gift of nature by taking care of it.

CONCLUSION

- * Surya Namaskars are a good way to keep the body in shape and the mind calm and healthy. A healthy and strong body is like an ornament. If we are healthy, we will be able to gather lots of knowledge, do hard and creative work or participate in healthy competitions. Due to the gift of Yoogasan given by ancient Sages, we remain healthy and lead a long life.
- * Regular practice of Surya Namaskara connects our mind, body, and soul, and brings out the best in us. It enhances our habits and brings about perfect harmony in our life.
- * The solar plexus (located behind the navel, which is the central point of the human body), also known as the second brain, is said to be connected to the sun. This is the main reason why the ancient *sages* recommended the practice of Surya Namaskar, because the regular practice of this technique enhances the solar plexus, which increases one's creativity and intuitive abilities.
- * If we practice the Surya Namaskara regularly, we notice some exceptional benefits all over our body. The intense and powerful asanas in the practice have an incredible impact on the stomach, liver, heart, intestines, chest, throat, and legs, which means the whole body from head to toe is benefited. The Sun Salutation also improves and enhances blood circulation throughout the body, and this ensures the proper functioning of the bowels, the stomach, and the nerve centres. When we practice this routine every day, the *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* are also balanced.

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