



What is Yoga ?

Presented by:
M.G. Prasad

The profound questions

- Who am I ?
 - Why am I Born ?
 - What is the purpose of life ?
 - Where am I going ?
 - ...
-
- Yoga provides answers for these questions

Traditional definitions of yoga

- Yoga is the cessation of mental operation.
- Yoga is disconnection of connection with suffering.
- Yoga is balance.
- Yoga is said to the unification of dualities.
- Yoga is the union of individual self with the Universal Self.
- (note: there are many additional traditional defintions)

Various types of yoga

- Ashtanga yoga (eight-fold yoga) or Raja yoga
- Bhakti yoga
- Karma yoga
- Jnana yoga
- Mantra yoga
- (note: there are many other types of yoga)

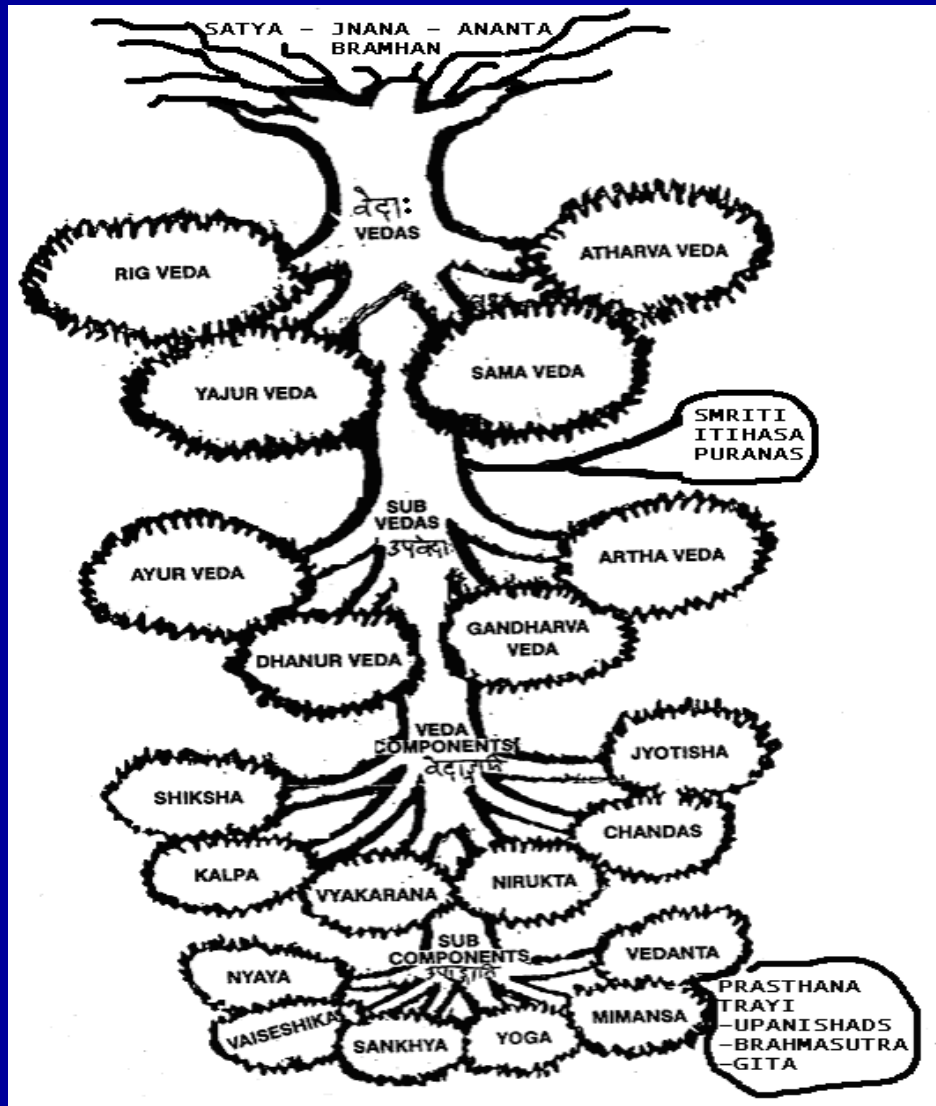
*Yoga** is the practical aspects of *Vedic* knowledge in all aspects of life

" The customs and habits, the dress and ornaments, the manners and etiquette, the conceptions of right and wrong and of good and evil, the learning, literature and the various arts like music, the political thoughts, views regarding all actions and the consecratory ceremonies, etc., of the Indians (*Bharatiyas*), are all permeated like the warp and woof by *Ashtanga Yoga*."

Sriranga Sadguru
1913 - 1969

****Yoga means the union of the individual soul with the Supreme***

Vedic Knowledge as an Inverted Tree



**Bramhan - God
Non - Dual Reality**

4 Vedas

Vedic literature

Integrated knowledge of Spirituality and Science

Three components of COSMOS (Tatvas)

- Jeeva refers to an individual soul and it is also referred as chit, a conscious being.
- Jagat refers to the material universe composed of the five elements of nature
 - space.
 - air,
 - fire,
 - water
 - earth.
- It is also referred to as achit i.e. inert.
- Ishwara refers to the Cosmic Soul or one God principle as Bramhan or Paratatva.

25 Principles of Sankhya Yoga

Ishwara

I. Purusa

2. Prakrti

3. Mahat ("Intellect")

4. Aham-kara ("Egoism")

5. Manas

6-10 Sensory Organs

ears
skin
eyes
tongue
nose

11-15 Motor Organs

speech (vak)
handling (pani)
walking (pada)
evacuation (payu)
reproduction (upastha)

16-20 Subtle elements

sound
touch
color
taste
odor

21-25 Gross elements

space (akasha)
air (vayu)
fire (agni)
water (ap)
earth (prthivi)

Ashtāñga Yoga (eight limbs of yoga) (also called as Raja yoga or Royal way of yoga)

- Ashtanga yoga forms the practical and scientific basis of Vedic (Hindu) philosophy and spirituality. Yoga process described in eight steps.
- It is based on Aphorisms (sutras) of yoga by Maharishi Patanjali. He is also the author of treatises on Grammar and Medicine.
- There 196 aphorisms on yoga divided into four chapters. There are several commentaries on this work.

Aphorisms of Yoga by Patanjali

- Sutra 1.1 Atha Yogaanushasanam
(Now is the beginning of instructions on yoga)

Sutra 1.2 Yogaschittavritti nirodaha
(Yoga is cessation of *mental operation*)

A *mental operation* is carried out through four-fold internal instrument that associates to self

Manas (mind) gathers information and is wavering

Buddhi (intellect) discriminating and is decisive

Ahamkara (Ego-sense) identifies and relates with self

Chitta (impression/memory) retaining and recording

(example: an elephant approaching me

Modifications of Mind

- Pramana (True cognition)

Through three means of validity

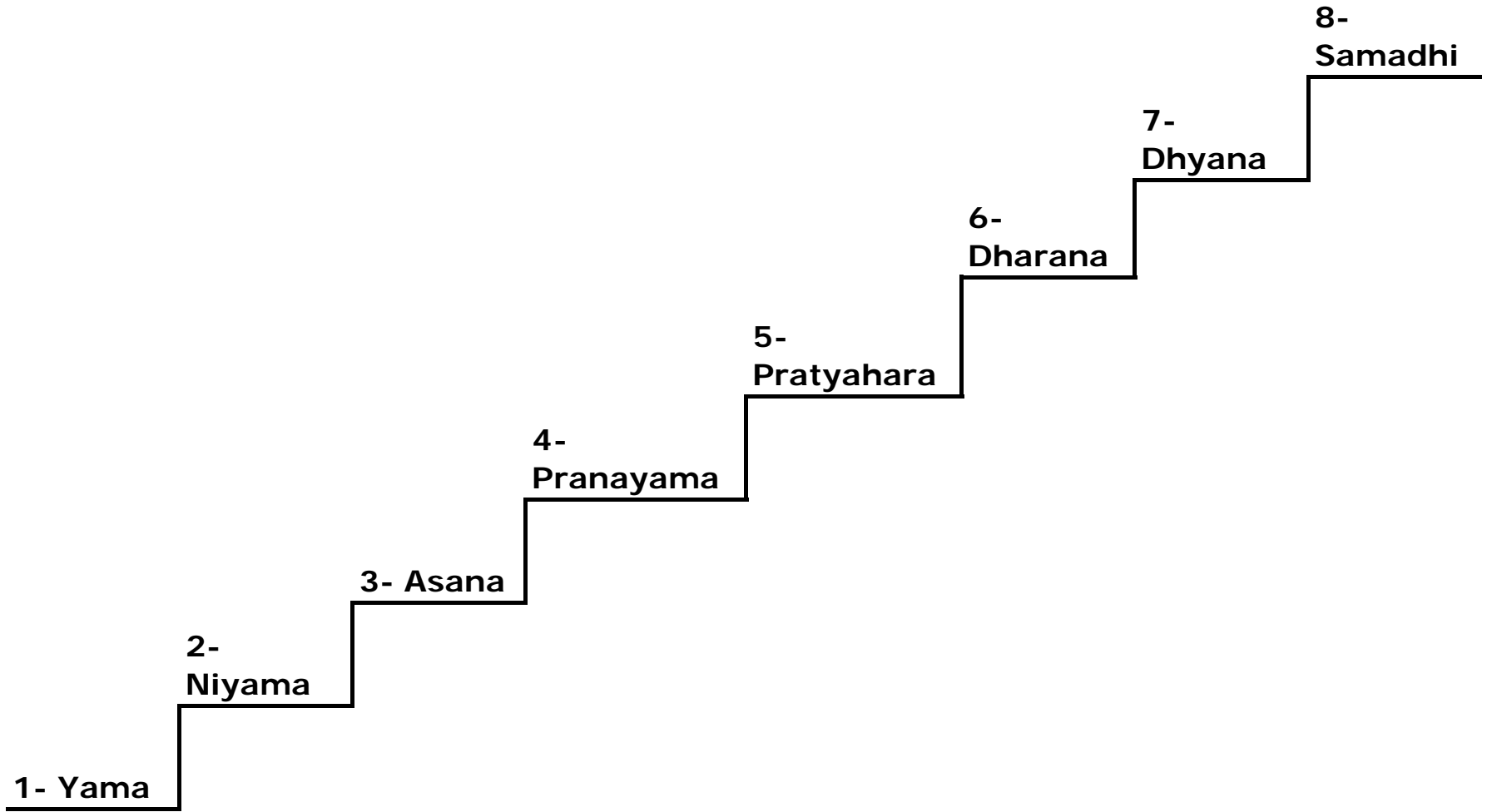
1) Direct perception 2) Inference 3) Verbal testimony from reliable person

- Viparyaya (False cognition)
- Vikalpa (merely verbal cognition)
- Nidra (sleep)
- Smriti (memory)

Mental afflictions

- Avidya (Wrong knowledge)
(on the basis of temporal taken as eternal)
- Asmita (False notion)
(based on mind identified as self)
- Raga (Passion)
(attachment to pleasure)
- Dvesha (Aversion)
(disliking of things, pain..)
- Abhinivesha (fear of death)
(instinctive fear of death and its causes)

The 8 Steps based on Patanjali's aphorisms



Yama

- Yama (self-control) deals with physical and mental disciplines and related practices.
 - *Ahimsa* (nonviolence),
 - *Satya* (Truth),
 - *Asteya* (non-covetedness),
 - *Bramhacharya* (continence),
 - *Aparigriha* (non-receiving)

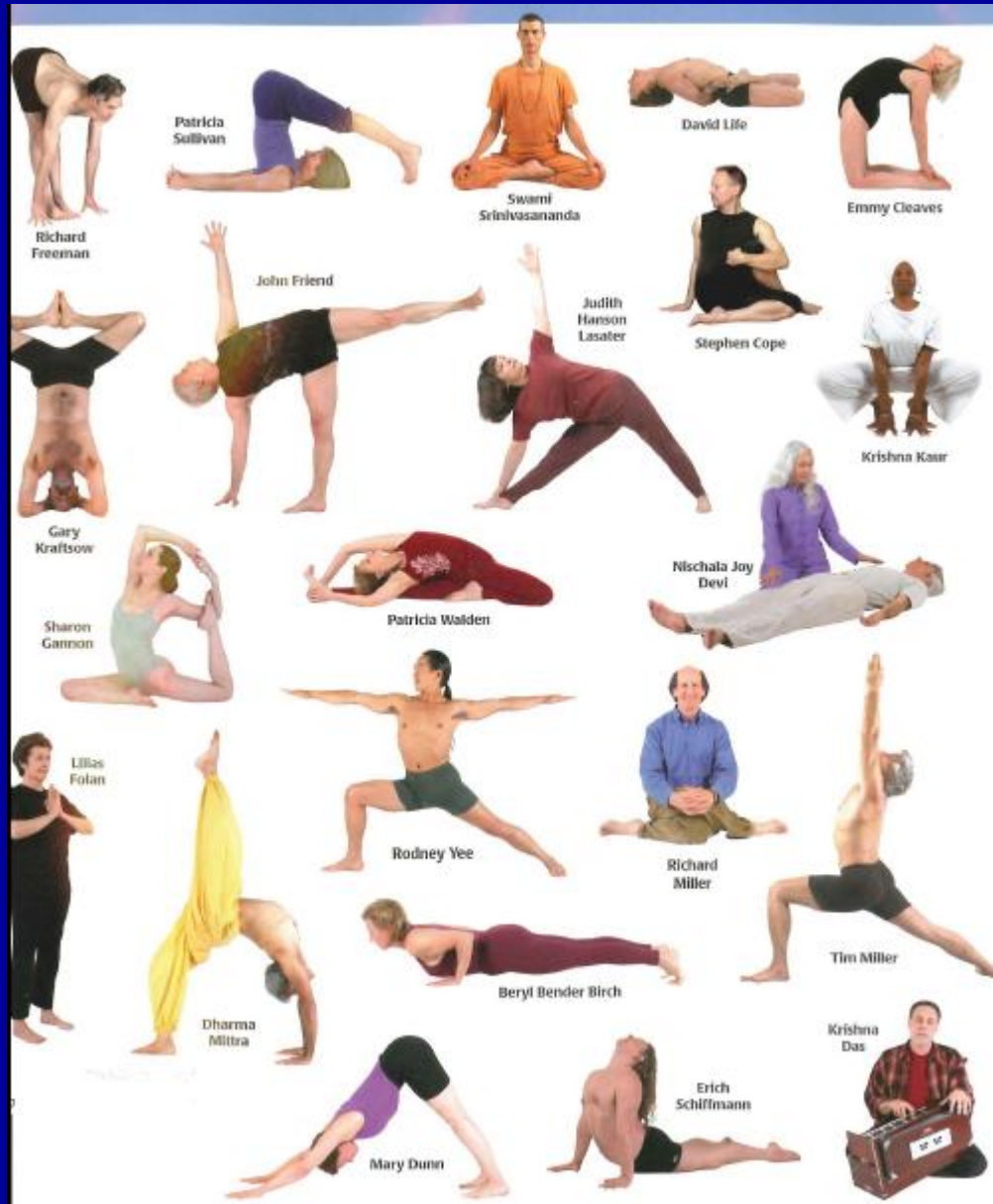
Niyama

- Niyama (discipline) also deals with physical and mental disciplines and related practices.
 - *Shoucha* (cleanliness),
 - *Santosha* (contentment),
 - *Tapah* (austerity),
 - *Swadhyaya* (Scriptural study),
 - *Ishvarapranidhana* (Surrender to Supreme Being as God)

Asana and Pranayama

- Asana deals with the practice of postures for the body.
- Pranayama deals with control and regulation of Prana.

American Yoga Teachers



Surya Namaskara



THE SUN SALUTATION Often used as a warm-up, this series of poses—

1 MOUNTAIN
Stand with feet together, slightly pigeon-toed (big toes touching, heels apart), with your hands clasped at heart level in prayer position

2 BACK BEND
Inhale, stretching your arms up over your head and arching your back, keeping legs and buttocks firm and feet planted firmly on the ground

3 FORWARD BEND
Exhale, stretching forward and downward, bringing your hands flat to the floor beside your feet and your head to your knees

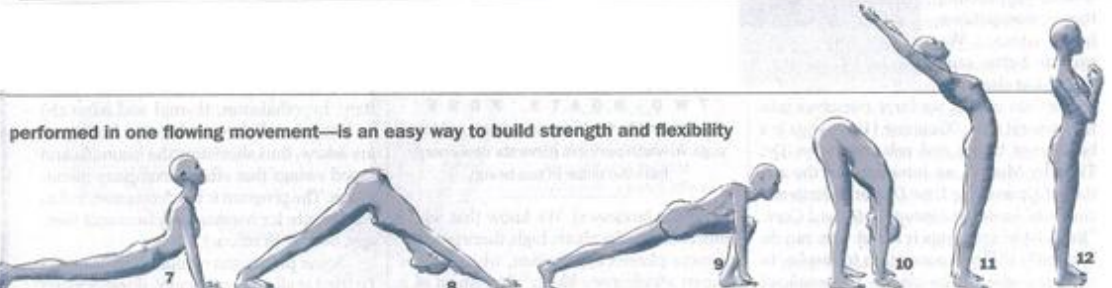
4 LUNGE
Inhale and hold your breath while reaching your left leg back to rest on the ball of your foot and tucking your right knee under your chest

5 PLANK
Still holding your breath, reach your right leg back, holding both legs straight and tightening your abdominals

6 STICK
Exhale, lowering your legs, hips and chest—as one unit—to within a few inches of the floor

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LON TWISTEN

performed in one flowing movement—is an easy way to build strength and flexibility



7 COBRA
Lower your hips, point your feet and inhale, lifting your chest toward the sky, with elbows slightly bent and pressed into your ribs

8 DOWNWARD DOG
Tuck toes under and exhale, lifting buttocks and bringing your body into an inverted V. Press your heels down

9 LUNGE
Lift your head and inhale, bringing your right foot forward between your hands

10 FORWARD BEND
Exhale and bend forward, bringing your left leg up to meet the right, and dropping your head to your knees

11 ARCHING BACK
Inhale and straighten your back, bringing your arms above your head. Look up and arch your back while remaining rooted to the ground

12 MOUNTAIN
Exhale, returning your hands to the prayer pose. Repeat the entire sequence, this time stepping back with the opposite leg

Some Key Asanas



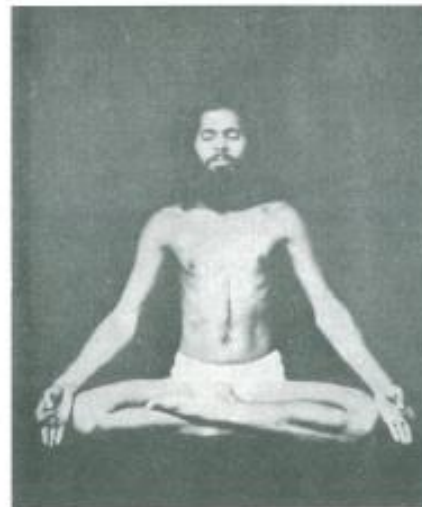
SEMI-MATSYENDRA POSTURE



DIAPHRAGM-RAISING EXERCISE IN TOPSY-TURVY POSTURE



CHIN LOCK



ONE OF THE FOUR MEDITATIVE POSTURES

Asanas mimic Nature



PALM TREE

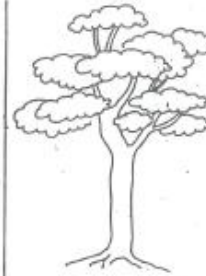
TĀDĀSANA



MOUNTAIN



PARVATĀSANA



TREE



VṚKṢĀSANA



LOTUS



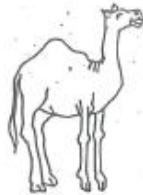
PADMĀSANA



STRETCHING
THE BOW



AKARṆADHANURĀSANA



CAMEL



UṢṬRĀSANA



CROCODILE



MAKARĀSANA



SCORPION



VṚŚCIKĀSANA



SERPENT



BHUJĀṄGĀSANA

Chakras

HOW IT WORKS

EASTERN VIEW

CROWN CHAKRA
Intuition, spirituality

BROW CHAKRA
Senses, intuition,
telepathy, meditation

THROAT CHAKRA
The ether, self-expression,
energy, endurance

HEART CHAKRA
Air, compassion, love
of others

NAVEL CHAKRA
Fire, personal power,
storage of the life force

SACRAL CHAKRA
Water, sexual energy

ROOT CHAKRA
Earth, the lower limbs

THE MYSTICAL

Enlightenment and good health require the free flow of the life force (**prana**) and the proper balance between the seven major energy hubs (**chakras**). (An eighth chakra, or **aura**, surrounds the body and encompasses the other seven.) The three lower chakras serve the body's physical needs, while the five upper chakras are associated with the spiritual realm.

WESTERN VIEW

BRAIN
Triggers relaxation
response

PITUITARY GLAND
May signal glands to
secrete fewer stress
hormones

THYROID GLAND
May signal glands
to secrete fewer
metabolic hormones

HEART
Strengthens circulatory
system, lowers blood
pressure

LUNGS
Improves deep breathing

**ADRENAL
GLANDS**
May deactivate stress
response by
suppressing adrenalin

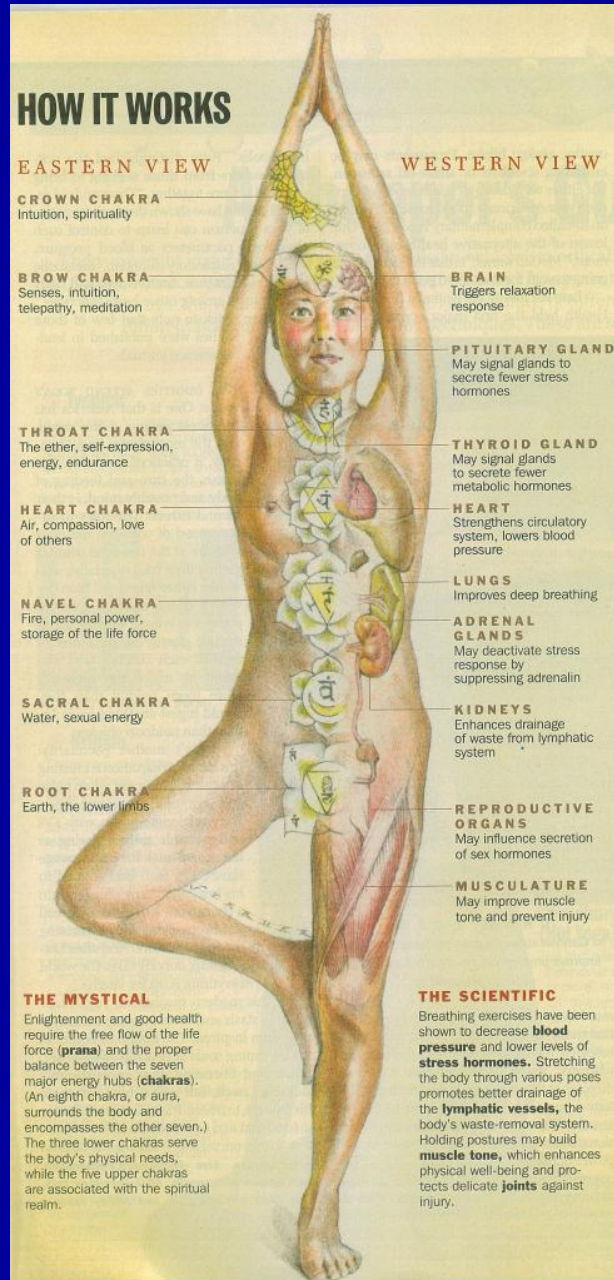
KIDNEYS
Enhances drainage
of waste from lymphatic
system

**REPRODUCTIVE
ORGANS**
May influence secretion
of sex hormones

MUSCULATURE
May improve muscle
tone and prevent injury

THE SCIENTIFIC

Breathing exercises have been shown to decrease **blood pressure** and lower levels of **stress hormones**. Stretching the body through various poses promotes better drainage of the **lymphatic vessels**, the body's waste-removal system. Holding postures may build **muscle tone**, which enhances physical well-being and protects delicate **joints** against injury.



108 Karanas



Rudra Dance

(ref: iraivan Shankar Nathan, Kauai Hindu Monastery)



Pratyahara and Dharana

- Pratyahara deals with the practice of withdrawing the consciousness from the multiplicity of thoughts and directing it towards innerself.
- Dharana deals with the development of the ability of the mind to focus and contain the object.

Dhyana and Samadhi

- Dhyāna is meditation i.e. continuous concentration on the object.
- This, in turn, leads one to Samādhi which refers to a state of balance and superconsciousness level.
- The order is important and the Guru who is a yogi, is necessary for this yoga as genuine guidance is required in this scientific and practical approach.

Ashtanga Yoga is the practical approach of *Vedanta*

1. *Yama*

- i. *Ahimsa* (nonviolence),
- ii. *Satya* (Truth),
- iii. *Asteya* (non-covetedness),
- iv. *Bramhacharya* (continence),
- v. *Aparigriha* (non-receiving)

2. *Niyama*

- i. *Shoucha* (cleanliness),
- ii. *Santosha* (contentment),
- iii. *Tapah* (austerity),
- iv. *Swadhyaya* (Scriptural study),
- v. *Ishvarapranidhana* (Surrender to Supreme God)

3. *Asana* Firm postures

4. *Pranayama* Vital force regulation

5. *Pratyahara* Withdrawal of senses from object

6. *Dharana* Fixing the mind on a sacred object

7. *Dhyana* Unbroken flow of mind on a sacred object

8. *Samadhi* Original state of bliss

