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Dedication

To all my relations, to the beautiful communities in Bali, Thailand and beyond that nourish, support and inspire me to no end with your magic and medicine. To all of the friends, family and teachers, seen and unseen, all over the world, you are integral on my journey towards awakening. I love you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Oceans of love and gratitude to Lily and Ramananda, the founders of the Blooming Lotus Yoga school, for teaching me, being patient with me and for creating this opportunity for me to shine my light and share love and truth with so many beautiful beings. Thank you to the wisdom and support of my teacher's teachers, Ramana Maharishi and Amma Sri Karunamayi. And to all of the Yogis who come through this magical journey with me with such open hearts and open minds, thank you for the privilege.

Namaste & Welcome

Namaste – A gesture of greeting, meaning, I bow to you, as the divine light in me salutes the divine light in you and I know that we are one. We are so happy to have you here with us on this journey into the self! This is an inspired opportunity to enjoy the benefits and bliss of being in beautiful nature, as deepen your connection with your body and mind, community and your practice. **Yoga** literally means “union” or “to yoke” our everyday selves with our highest most divine selves. Yoga is a powerful tool that teaches us how to live a life of balance, peace, harmony, strength and flexibility on all levels.

A disciplined practice of yoga has the transformational benefits of deepening our connection to the body, mind and spirit, supporting us in living and loving long, vibrant, happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our approach:

The practices we share are educational, engaging and appropriate for all levels, and are designed to help strengthen and deepen connections between nature, body, heart & mind. Our aim is to provide you with high quality, safe, balanced, playful instruction of yoga asana, pranayama (breath-control techniques), meditation, philosophy, karma yoga and the bhakti devotional practices of singing & dancing. We want to help you step into the fullness and beauty of your life and visions, to refine your personal practice, and help you discover ways of maintaining balance in every facet of your life.

Gratitude & Enjoy!

We are so happy to have you on this journey with us. Please feel welcome to connect at any point throughout the retreat if you feel you need support, have a request, would like to share your experience or just want to ask any question. **Important to remember is that this retreat is for you, so please just take away with you what resonates and leave the rest.** Thank you for participating in this transformation yoga retreat. We hope you enjoy this opportunity to immerse yourself in being a student, to have fun, to be barefoot in nature and to make friends from all over the world!

Thank you for your presence on this journey,

With Love & Blessings,
Francie

Respect for Yourself:

This retreat is for you! Throughout your time here, we invite you into a spirit of **openness** and **playfulness** as you explore and discover your personal edge. Most importantly, we invite you to **cultivate presence, curiosity, inquiry, consciousness and mindfulness** in your actions and really honour and listen to your body and mind.

Attitudes of Yoga:

Willingness – Transformation is a reflection of our willingness to connect, to let go, to aspire to realize oneself. In other words, you get out what you put in. Use this as an opportunity to go deeply into self-reflection so that you can empower yourself to recognize and begin shifting patterns that no longer serve and integrating ones that do.

Beginners Mind – According to Zen Buddhism, when our rice bowl is full, so to speak, there is no room for more. Thus in order to stay open and keep learning, we must continually empty our bowls, so to speak. Throughout your time here, we invite you to meet each moment with a child-like sense of awe and wonder, in a spirit of openness, curiosity and playfulness as we explore and discover our personal patterns and edges.

Mindfulness - We invite you to be conscious and mindful in your actions, taking advantage of this time to really honour and listen to your body's messages, using this as an opportunity to be mindful and discerning of the food and substances you consume, remembering that attitudes and behaviours 'off the mat' are just as important, as those on 'on the mat'.

Saucha & Ahimsa – Cleanliness & Non-Violence - A vegetarian diet is recommended, as well as avoiding drugs and alcohol for the duration of the retreat.

Respect for others

Sangha – We are a community of seekers on this journey towards knowing ourselves more. Throughout this process, it is normal to feel expansions and contractions in the body, mind and heart and we are all here to support each other and cultivate a safe place to release, experience, and simply be.

Punctuality – As a gesture of respect for the group, please ensure that you arrive a **minimum of 5 minutes early** to each class to ensure a prompt start.

Attendance – We are on a progressive journey together and all of us matter and affect each other. Please be mindful. If you have to miss a class, please let us know so that we are not left waiting or wondering - you can tell your teacher or let your karma-yogi partner know.

Respect for the Space:

Yoga Shala - Please make yourselves at home. **Take initiative** to care for the space, helping to maintain the cleanliness and clear flow of energy within the space. Please keep all doors to the bathrooms, yoga shala and closet closed at all times.

Introduction to Yoga Philosophy

Yoga chitta vritti nirodhah

Translation: Union or yoga arises when the fluctuations /waves of thoughts in the mind /consciousness cease. - From Patanjali's Yoga Sutras)

What is Yoga?

The word **yoga** literally means “to yoke” or “union”. More than just a practice of physical exercises, Yoga is the coming together of the individual self or consciousness, with the infinite universal consciousness or spirit. Yoga is a method of inquiry in to the nature of the mind, which emphasizes **practice and direct experience**.

The “Goal” of Yoga:

The “goal” of yoga is to align to the universal consciousness in order to experience joy, freedom and the stillness of full consciousness. **Alignment**, is related to mind and body, and refers to how various parts of us are integrated and interconnected. The world is what think and believe it to be. It is subjective in essence - a projection of what we feel it is, based on past experiences and conditionings. What we see in others is what we have inside, like a mirror that is only projecting what is inside. We have the potential, using conscious intentions, thoughts and words, to co-create the life we want, to go beyond our limitations and fears, to surrender and open, to choose the type of person we want to be, to flow with the divine grace, to see the beauty in and all around us.

Our Spiritual Identity:

The practice of yoga is based on the idea that we are eternal spiritual souls or **atman**, traveling within the vessel of this physical/emotional body. The physical body is considered the temple of the soul, an instrument through which we can access the internal divinity, our true self, and to align, connect and serve the divine wisdom.

As manifestations of the supreme divine consciousness in the material universe, we have the opportunity to awaken to our true nature of **sat chit ananda** – being consciousness bliss, **through the main practices of asana, pranayama, meditation, and chanting**. Yoga **asana**, the physical postures or exercises that have come to be known as Yoga are really only the most superficial aspect of this profound science.

Main Practices of Yoga

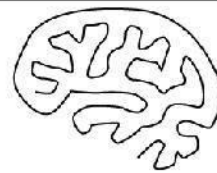
Asana	Meditation	Pranayama	Chanting
Helps creates lightness in the physical body and correct imbalances in the physiological body	Inspires the intellect, and engages the mind	Focuses the mind, regulates the movement of prana , life force energy	Penetrates all the bodies and sheaths, koshas , illuminates every part of our being, creating transparency so the light of the soul, atman , can shine brightly though

Yoga Philosophy: the 4 Paths

There are various paths of yoga that lead towards the ultimate goal of union, each a specialized branch of a comprehensive system, the main four being Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. Each, with their own world of techniques, supports people with different temperaments and approaches to life. All of the paths lead ultimately to the same destination - to union with Brahman/ God/ Oneness/ the Universe...- and the lessons from each need to be integrated if true wisdom is to be attained. For our **sadhana**, or spiritual practice, it is often suggested that we practice a balanced integral yoga, incorporating practices from all 4 paths.

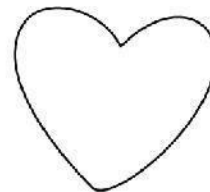
Raja Yoga – Path of Self - Discipline

The "royal" or highest path of yoga, formalized by the sage **Patanjali**, is a comprehensive method for controlling the waves of thought by turning our mental and physical energy into spiritual energy. The chief practice is self-discipline, including **Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga & Meditation**.



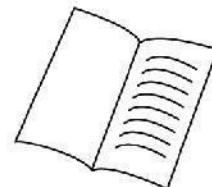
Bhakti Yoga – Path of Self-Surrender

The path of devotion is one in which we offer and surrender to the divine through a devotion in which one sees the divinity in every creature and all things. **Mantra meditation** is one form of Bhakti.



Jnana yoga – Path of Self-Awareness

The path of wisdom applies discriminative intelligence for spiritual liberation – reflecting and developing awareness of one's own sense of Being. The chief practice of Jnana Yoga is meditation & Self -Inquiry – *Atma Vicharya* – inquiry into the source of the "I" thought - "*So Hum*": **Who am I? / I am that.**



Karma Yoga – The Path of Selfless Action

Karma is the universal law of cause and effect. All actions have consequences. Karma Yoga is the knowledge that deals with how to come into harmony with these forces, by being in full awareness with actions while letting go of the outcome or results. Seva is a practice of karma yoga, selfless service to others as part of one's larger Self without thought of gain or reward, as it is an act of sublimating ego through having no attachments to the fruits of your actions, offering them up to the divine. Balancing the **3 Gunas**, through mindful efforts, helps up to live in the bliss of the present moment, navigating through the endless obstacles that arise from the pull of karma.



Yoga Philosophy: Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga (Ashta – 8, Anga – Limb) is the path to enlightenment that offers guidelines for a peaceful, meaningful and purposeful life.

The first four stages of Patanjali's Ashtanga yoga concentrate on refining our personalities, gaining mastery over the body, and developing an energetic awareness of ourselves. They are preparation for the next 4 limbs. The second half of the journey deals with the senses, the mind, and attaining a higher state of consciousness.

The Yamas and Niyamas can be approached individually or they can be seen as a progressive system towards Realization.

1. Yamas

Ethical standards relating to the Golden Rule of "Do unto others as would have them do unto you.

The five yamas are:

Ahimsa: nonviolence

Satya: truthfulness

Asteya: non-stealing

Brahmacharya: non-excess

Aparigraha: non-attachment

2. Niyama

Niyama, the second limb, has to do with self-discipline and spiritual observances. Regularly attending temple or church services, saying grace before meals, developing your own personal **meditation** practices, or making a habit of taking contemplative walks alone are all examples of niyamas in practice.

The five niyamas are:

Saucha: cleanliness/purity

Santosha: contentment

Tapas: heat; spiritual austerities

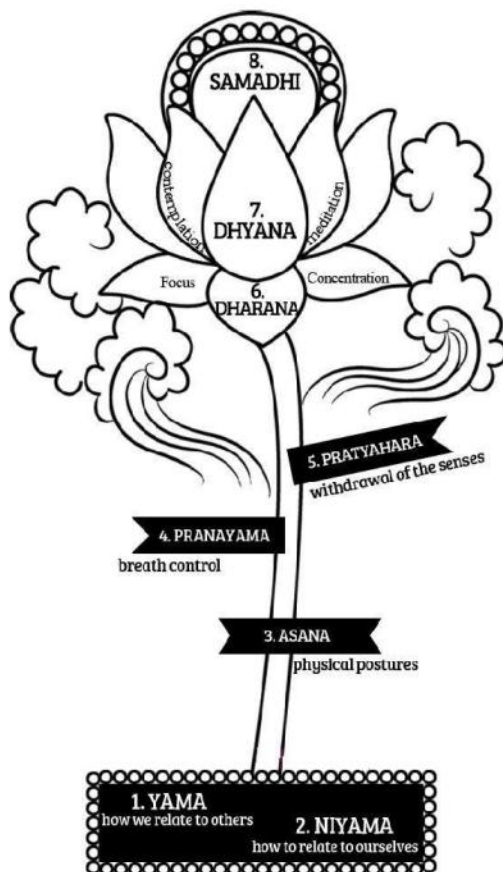
Svadyaya: study of the sacred scriptures and of one's self

Isvara pranidhana: surrender to God

3. Asana

Asana, the postures practiced in yoga, comprise the third limb. In the yogic

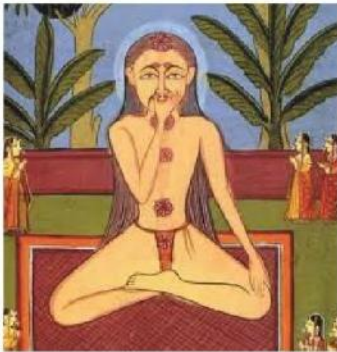
8 LIMBS OF YOGA



view, the body is a temple of spirit, the care of which is an important stage of our spiritual growth. Through the practice of asana, we develop the habit of discipline and the ability to concentrate, both of which are necessary for meditation.

4. Pranayama: Breath Control

Generally translated as breath control, this fourth stage consists of techniques designed to gain mastery over the respiratory process while recognizing the connection between the breath, the mind, and the emotions. As implied by the literal translation of *pranayama*, "life force extension," yogis believe that it not only rejuvenates the body but also actually extends life itself. You can practice pranayama as an isolated technique (i.e., simply sitting and performing a number of breathing exercises), or integrate it into your daily hatha yoga routine.



5. Pratyahara: Sensory Transcendence

Pratyahara, the fifth limb, means withdrawal of senses, or sensory transcendence. It is during this stage that we make the conscious effort to draw our awareness away from the external world and outside stimuli. Keenly aware of, yet cultivating a detachment from, our senses, we direct our attention internally. The practice of pratyahara provides us with an opportunity to step back and take a look at ourselves. This withdrawal allows us to objectively observe our cravings: habits that are perhaps detrimental to our health and which likely interfere with our inner growth.

6. Dharana: Concentration

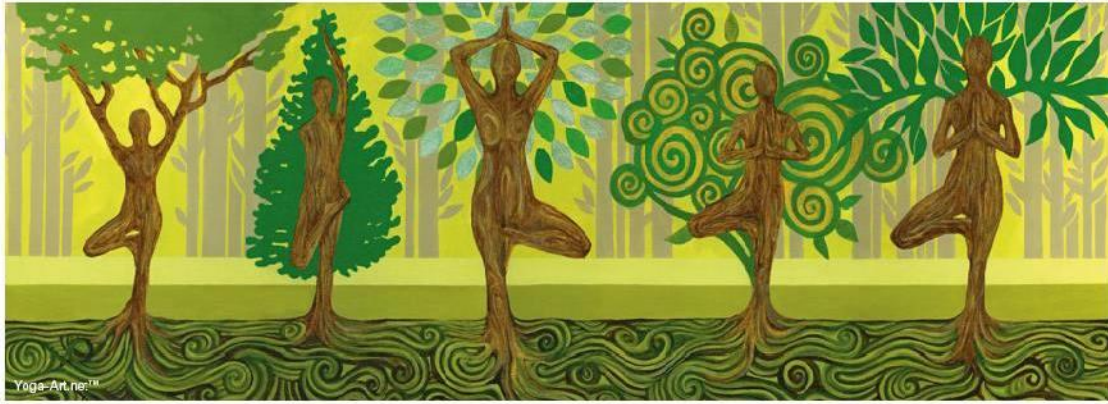
As each stage prepares us for the next, the practice of pratyahara creates the setting for *dharana*, or concentration. Having relieved ourselves of outside distractions, we can now deal with the distractions of the mind itself. No easy task! In the practice of concentration, which precedes meditation, we learn how to slow down the thinking process by concentrating on a single mental object: a specific energetic center in the body, an image of a deity, or the silent repetition of a sound. We, of course, have already begun to develop our powers of concentration in the previous three stages of posture, breath control, and withdrawal of the senses. In asana and pranayama, although we pay attention to our actions, our attention travels. Our focus constantly shifts as we fine-tune the many nuances of any particular posture or breathing technique. In pratyahara we become self-observant; now, in dharana, we focus our attention on a single point. Extended periods of concentration naturally lead to meditation.



7. Dhyana: Single-Pointed Concentration/ Flow

Meditation or contemplation, the seventh stage of ashtanga, is the uninterrupted flow of concentration. Although concentration (*dharana*) and meditation (*dhyana*) may appear to be one and the same, a fine line of distinction exists between these two stages. Where dharana practices one-pointed attention, dhyana is ultimately a state of being keenly aware without

The Practice: Asana

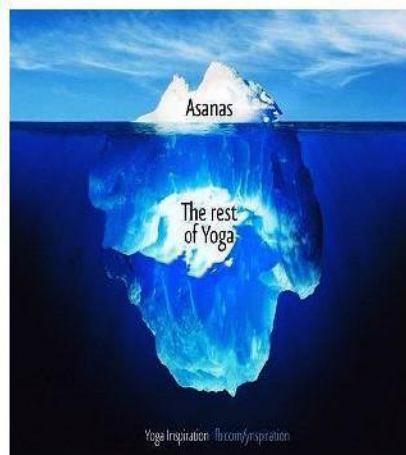


Hatha Yoga (Ha = sun , tha= moon) is an umbrella term for the systems of physical postures that our culture today has come to associate the term Yoga. It is the path of bodily discipline, whose highest purpose is to purify the body to give one awareness and control over the internal states, rendering the body/mind fit for meditation.

The physical practice of yoga is called **asana** – physical postures linked with breath and movement to build internal heat, called **tapas**, which cleanses the internal organs and glands, oxygenating blood and joints and clearing the mind of disconnected thoughts which can lead to anxiety, stress, anger or depression.

Asana is essential to life force control – it supports the ability to invoke divine energy in preparation for pranayama and meditation, by alleviating strain, tension, restlessness, laziness and bodily attachment and bestowing bodily control, mental and physical calmness.

Through our practice of asana, our aim is to align physical, personal, emotional and spiritual with the natural order, or Supreme Divinity, to come to the remembrance, understanding and trust that we are guided by grace, that from a superior perspective, all is working in synchrony with a perfect and universal plan, and that even the so called “bad” or negative experiences have a positive quality and can be used to teach us something. The practice of asana can be used to **elevate consciousness**, help us feel more aligned, happier, more well being and more balanced than before our practice.



The Practice: Basic Alignment Guidelines

Guidelines for Practice from Patanjali's yoga Sutras:

Shrtire Sukham Asanam

Asana (posture, seated position, physical practice) is **steady** (strong; steady, stable, motionless) and **comfortable** (ease filled, happy, light, relaxed). Performed with willingness as well as acceptance. Firm as well as pleasant. Strong as well as relaxed. Maintained with effort as well as ease.

Focus on the Breath. Relax.

Avoid pushing yourself or damaging the body.

There are many principles of alignment in yoga asana from many traditions. Here are just a few very basic ideas to keep in mind throughout your practice:

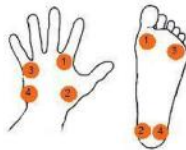
Alignment of the Physical Body:

Spine

Yoga asana focuses on elongating the spine and increasing its range of motion. Because Yoga is ultimately of practice of working with subtle energies, maintaining alignment and length in the Spine is of the utmost importance in yoga asana alignment.

Hands /Feet: Our foundation

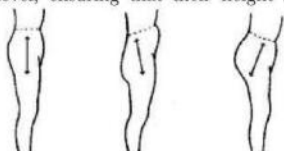
We begin by setting up and aligning the foundation of the poses. Spread your hands / feet wide to create the most stable foundation possible to support our being, plant down through the 4 corners of your hands and feet, especially the big toes, then draw the energy in and up through the body through the domes or “nostrils” of the hands and feet. *Mantra: Spread out. Plant Down. Draw in.*



Soft Elbows / Knees – There are no straight lines in nature and thus considering we are a creation of nature, this goes for our bodies as well. We can always maintain softness in these joints, ensuring that we are not hyper-extending, as this compromises the integrity of alignment in the pose. Teachers will often remind us to “micro-bend” or to have soft elbows and knees as this helps us to **yield** into the earth or whatever surface we are upon. Actively yielding to the Earth creates a rebound effect, elongating the body upwards into space.

Shoulders / Hips – These are the gateways for the arms and legs to connect with the torso, and two common areas in which we commonly experience tension in the body. When the shoulders are hugging the ears, the body is being sent messages of stress! So think about relaxing and softening the shoulder, rolling your shoulders away from your ears creating as much space as possible in the neck. Keep the hips level, ensuring that their height is equalized.

Neutralize Pelvic tilt – Think of the pelvis as a bowl filled with water. In standing and balancing positions, we want to keep the bowl level so that we are



not tipping forward and hyper arching our low back, spilling the water out the front, or tilting it too far up, as is common in people with tight hips doing seated postures, spilling the water out the back. Make sure the hips and pelvis are level. If you find your low back rounding and your pelvis tipping up, then help yourself to a cushion or two or three so that you can be aligned and comfortable. We also want to make sure we neutralize the front to back placement of the hips so that it rests just atop the legs.

Neck and head - In most active styles of yoga asana, the general principle is to keep the head and neck long and in line with the spine, bringing the chin back in if the head is jutting forward. I know a body worker who tells his clients: "Take the head away from the computer!".

Soft Face & Eyes – Make sure your eyes are soft, your jaw is relaxed and soft, and your face is nice and released. Having a soft controlled gaze or focus, or **Drishti**, helps us to develop concentration, and focused consciousness to see the world as it is. When we are beginning our practice of yoga, we often lose balance by looking around and paying attention to all of the stimulation and distraction outside of ourselves. Focusing the attention inwards, by holding a soft gaze point either to our 3rd eye or our hearts, encourage stability and inward looking.

Tips for Transitioning between Poses in Alignment:

- Connect and synchronize movements with the breath
- Breathe into the back body while transitioning
- Move with steady graceful flowing rhythm
- Maintain steady moment to moment awareness
- Take your time and move from stability and integration first
- Activate stability before active expansion
- Adjust alignment of back leg first, then front leg

Asana & the Breath

Inhale

When...

- Opening, unfolding, expanding outer body
- Lengthening and opening the spine
- Opening the arms to the sides or overhead
- Coming out of forward folds of lateral standing poses
- Going up into a pose against gravity
 - bringing lightness to a pose

Exhale

When...

- Closing, unfolding, or flexing the outer body
- Bringing the arms to the midline
- Going into forward folds of lateral bends
- Releasing down with gravity
- Twisting

assistance, and it will also provide you with new inspiration and motivation for your daily home practice.

7. Use the resources around you well. If you are feeling a little stuck all by yourself, look around for some help and a break in the routine. Find a local donation-based community yoga class to attend occasionally. Learn from reading blogs and yoga websites, or even take an online yoga class if that's what is most available to you.

Tip: *Some of the online resources I like to use when I am travelling are YogaGlo / See Hear Be Now / Yogadownload.com – all of which offer free trial memberships and classes with great, experienced teachers.*

8. Be smart about sequencing. I like to just “play” Yoga on my mat by really listening to what my body needs in that moment. If that's what you are going to do, make sure your practice is balanced!

Tips for smart sequencing:

Start by getting in touch with your breath. Ujjayi Pranayama in child's pose or seated position

1) Warm up the spine and backs of the legs slowly with some nice gentle stretches – cat/cows, rag doll forward fold, gentle lunges are all good options.

2) Sun Salutations – ESSENTIAL! Both Surya Namaskar A and B. Really follow the breath. Be precise through the vinyasa positions – don't skimp on your Chaturangas!

3) Standing and Balancing poses – Personally I like working with the **Virabhadrasa** or Warrior poses – Virabhadrasa I, II, III, Exalted Warrior – (you can type in these names to Google images to cue you memory. Trikonasana (Triangle Pose) and Parsvokonasana (Extended Side Angle Pose) are also great as are the twisted variations of each of these poses. Give your hip flexors some attention with runner's lunge/lizard or a low lunge with the arms arching up overhead for a nice heart opening sensation.

4) Seated poses – Include forward folds, twists and hip-openers. Always practice equally on the left and right sides. Include focus on **building core-strength** with strong, long Chaturangas and poses like Navasana (boat pose), forearm plank and side plank.

5) Backbends - When you are properly warmed up, practice *backbends* – maybe just start with a Bridge pose. Locust, Bow and Camel are all great poses to build strength around the spine and to really open the chest. It is important to stay really engaged with your bandhas in all your backbends. Having a strong lift at the navel will help make space in your lower back for deeper and safer back bending. *Always practice a gentle forward fold to neutralize the spine after back bending.*

6) End with inversions and other quieting poses, like some passive forward folding or restoratives.

7) Savasana – Let your mind and body relax and be receptive as you give your body the time to integrate all of the energetic movement that you facilitated through asana..

8) Sit and Meditate.

Pranayama - Art of Breathing

*"When the Breather wanders, the mind is unsteady,
but when the Breath is still, so is the mind still".*

— Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Pranayama is the extension of life force energy in the body, which supports health and longevity. Pranayama is the breathing practice of yoga and is the disciplining of our life force energy (prana), to remove blockages within our physical and energetic system, to clear illness and pain and ignite the spine to help regulate the nervous systems, so that we may achieve higher states of consciousness and awareness.

Understanding and controlling prana is the key to health mind/body balance.

Conscious breath control is the key to realizing the benefits of asana as it brings us into a deeper connection with our inner self.

"Prana" is the subtle energy or life force that links matter and spirit, the astral and the physical. This vital energy or life force, located in the body's **nadis** or energy channels, is in all life forms and is central to all yoga practices. **Prana is a subtle force of energy carried in food, air, water, sunlight, the atmospheres we spend time in, the people we surround ourselves with,** and it animates all form of matter.

"Ayama" means extension, expansion, to stretch, lengthen, prolong, regulate

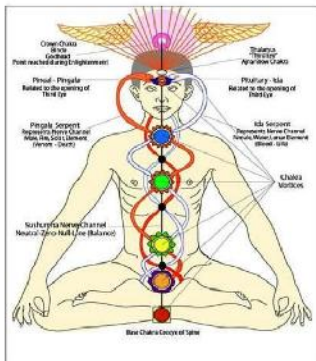
Benefits of Pranayama - Pranayama helps reduce stress, quiets the mind, enhances concentration, memory and focus, and invigorates, heats and purifies the body.

Nadis: According to ancient tantric texts, our bodies contain over 72,000 nadis or energetic channels, which in essence are like the bodies irrigation system, channeling prana to every cell. The 3 main nadis are Ida, Pingala and Sushumna Nadi.

Sushumna is the central channel and is associated with the river Saraswati. The purpose of hatha (ha – sun, tha- moon) yoga is to balance the sun moon energies, the right and left brain, male and female, the rational and intuitive, which leads to the rise of **kundalini energy** and the awakening of higher consciousness. It is said that along the spine is the direct highway that the earth mortal must follow in ascent to liberation.

Ida is the left channel. Ida is white, feminine, cold, and represents lunar energy. Originating in Muladhara Chakra, Ida ends up in the left nostril.

Pingala is the right channel. Pingala is red, masculine, hot, and represents the solar energy. Originating in Muladhara Chakra, Pingala ends up in the right nostril.



Meditation Techniques

Yoga is the method of victory. "The human body and mind are veritable battlegrounds for the war between wisdom and the conscious delusive force manifesting as vidya, ignorance. Every spiritual aspirant, aiming to establish within himself the rule of King Soul, must defeat the rebels, King Ego and his powerful allies" (Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita, p.24)

Meditation is a practice of finding balance between effort and surrender; balancing the will power to sustain concentration and detachment from distraction to remain in the heightened state of awareness, and the ability to relax, surrender and let go of all expectations and desires. There are many simple techniques for meditation to bring the mind into focus, returning it to stillness; Slow and steady Pranayama can always be engaged to refresh and revitalize the mind if it's feeling tired, fatigued or unfocused. Here are a few examples of meditation techniques:

Awareness – Breath or the space between breaths/the 3rd eye/ the sacred space of the heart / sounds of the environment

Prayer / Gratitude – Connect with the highest source and get clear on the feeling you wish fulfilled. "Prayers go up, blessings come down". Gratitude is another powerful form of prayer that breeds contentment with life.

Chanting Mantra– Vibration, Aum/Sacred sounds (see section on chanting mantra)

Who Am I? – The main practice of **Self-Inquiry** as taught by Ramana Maharishi.

Affirmations – Purifying thoughts, using words that benefit and cultivate our highest good

Yantra/Mandala – 2 or 3 dimensional spiritual/Ritual circle that represent the universe, used to focus meditation and create sacred space

Guided Meditation – e.g. Yoga Nidra, Visualizations

External Objects – e.g. Japa mala (with 108 mala rudraksha or other beads), candle gazing, moon, rituals

Active Meditation– e.g. Asana, walking, dancing, Qi gong, breath observation

Vipassana - Insight meditation, watching the space between breaths

Metta Meditation –Buddhist practice of Loving Kindness - Compassion for Self and Others

Chakra Meditation – Chanting *beej* or seed sounds of the chakras or simply focusing on the physical counterpart location and glands associated with each chakra

Key Meditation Practice Points

- **Be Consistent and Create a Habit**
- **Create a Sacred Space and/or Alter Space**
- **Time** – Most ideal for practice is dawn and dusk, especially *Brahmamuhurta* between 3 - 6am when the atmosphere is most clean, charged and unruffled by the activities of the day
- **Establish a comfortable sitting position**
- **Be mindful of the Breath**

Mantra / Chanting

“The aim is spiritual, not denominational. The power of mantra lies in the vibrations, and these vibrations work on many levels, whether the sayings are pronounced out loud or silently ... The simple act of saying a mantra will still bring the heart and mind into alignment with its subtle goal, which is to bring heightened self-awareness and a deeper sense of peace and calm.” – Alanna Kaivalya

In **Bhakti Yoga**, or the **yoga of devotion**, we surrender the ego, our intellect, our doubts, judgments & fears, and we harness the power of our emotions to help fuel our connection with the divine. In opening our heart in this way we create greater awareness and understanding of our true nature, bringing us into deeper levels of contentment, sweetness, compassion, light and energy.

Mantra Yoga – Man – thinking mind, Tra – to protect or expand. Mantras are powerful sound vibrations that have the ability to alter consciousness. Through the practice of chanting, we center consciousness on Spirit through the repetition of powerful incantations and seed sounds of universal sounds. The power of mantra lies in vibrations, and it works on many levels, both subtle and overt. We can invoke an intention or the quality or essence of a particular deity.

Chanting - Chants are uplifting compilations of vibrations that can be used as prayers for peace, health, wellbeing, to focus the mind and empower whatever we want to give energy to. Chanting has the power to awaken our physical and energetic bodies. It can be used to loosen mental chatter to still the mind, becoming one-pointedly focused, and bringing the heart into alignment.

Check out this incredible video on **Cymatics**, the study of visible sound vibration that effectively shows us how sound affects matter:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3oItpVa9fs>

In **kirtan**, or call and response devotional singing, we lift our voices to heal our spirits and raise our vibrations by repeating mantras over and over, shifting our awareness from our heads to our hearts. Singing reminds us of our essential nature: joyful, openhearted, centered, and blissful.



Mudra

Mudras are sacred gestures, or “energetic seals” that are symbolic of the rest of the body and are used as symbolic expressions of inner states. Mudras are often used in conjunction with pranayama, meditation and asana to stimulate different parts of the body involved with breathing and to affect the flow of prana in the body. Here are a few basic mudras:

<p>Anjali Mudra ‘Seal of Honouring’</p> <p>Symbolism - Honouring, worshiping, balance, union of dual nature, humility, internal focus</p>	
<p>Jnana Mudra ‘ Seal of Wisdom’, Contains energy in a closed circuit which is conducive to inner focus</p> <p>Symbolism: Wisdom, knowledge, introspection</p>	
<p>Chin Mudra ‘Seal of Consciousness’, Gesture of Receiving</p> <p>Symbolism: Represents the interrelated nature of consciousness, the union of Shiva & Shakti. The thumb represents the teacher and the index finger the student, the ego, the mind. Joining these aspects together helps silence the mind.</p>	
<p>Dhyana Mudra ‘Seal of Meditation’ Gesture of Concentration and Healing</p> <p>Symbolism: Hands and fingers form the shape of a triangle, which is symbolic of the spiritual fire or the three jewels of Buddhism. Also resembles an empty/full bowl, a key reminder for maintaining Beginner’s Mind</p>	 <p>DHYANA MUDRA</p>
<p>Vishnu Mudra</p> <p>Symbolism: the Conch of Vishnu, waking us up from the illusion of Maya. Used in nadi shodhana or alternate nostril pranayama, the index and middle finger are tucked into the palm of the hand. Right hand is associated with giving, and the left with receiving</p>	
<p>Lotus Mudra – Heart chakra opener</p> <p>Symbolism: In Buddhism, the lotus blossom represents heart opening, growth and enlightenment. The lotus is rooted in mud and darkness, and grows up through water, surfacing beautifully toward the sun. Like the lotus we have our struggles and dark places, and through experience we grow toward the light to finally emerge and blossom. Like the flower, with this mudra, we open ourselves to divine source, receiving whatever we need and much more.</p>	

Sadhana Practice Guide

There are many different methods and techniques to practice Pranayama, Meditation, & Chanting. The key is that it is a **PRACTICE**, even if it is just for 5 minutes a day!

The journey IS the destination.

I. Ground & Tune in

1. **Find a comfortable seat** (literal meaning of “asana”)
2. **Pratyahara –Withdrawing the senses from the external, drawing awareness within** - Bring awareness to the sounds and sensations all around you, to the Natural/Organic Breath, follow the natural pause at the beginning and end of each breath, Bring awareness to your heartbeat, how you feel today, scan your body for any place of tension or holding, observe the functioning of all 5 senses...
3. **Chanting the Sacred Sound “Aum” – 3 x**, followed by mantra

II. Pranayama

1. **Ujayi - Ujayi” triumphantly uprising” or “victorious” breath**, so called as it refers to the triumphant uprising of prana through the sushumna nadi. Also known as “Oceanic Breath” or “Darth Vadar Breath” as we create an audible sound as we close and tone the epiglottis muscles at the back of the throat.

Practice:

Rhythmic Breath – Equalize the lengths of inhales & exhales, for example, Breathe in for four counts and breathe out for a count of 4.

Extending the Exhale –Lengthen the exhale, working comfortably towards twice the length of the inhale, a ratio of 1:2, so for example, breathe in for a count of 4, then breathe out to a count of 8. You can also include a light breath retention, or “kumbhaka” after each breath.

2. **Nadi Shodhana - Alternate nostril breathing** (minor variations called Sukha Pranayama & Anulouma Viloma). Clearing the “Ida” and “Pingala”, or the sun and moon energy channels that spiral around the sushumna channel, intersecting at each chakra.

Practice:

Take **Vishnu Mudra**, bringing the index and middle finger to the center of the palm, closing the right nostril with the thumb and the left nostril with the ring finger.

One complete round = Left to Right, Right to Left.. Complete 5, 9, 12, or 16 + rounds

III. Meditation - E.g. Breath awareness, 3rd Eye, Sacred Space of the heart, mantra...

Practice: Start with prayer, asking for guiding or offering gratitude, then watch the breath, watch the spaces between the breaths, witness and label each arising thought.... Begin with 5 minutes, and then gradually extend the time you spend in stillness each day ☺

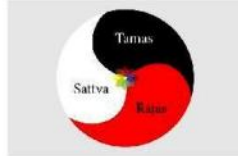
IV. Closing Prayers/Gratitude:

1. **Reflect on the Intention** and on how the body/mind/spirit is feeling
2. **Cultivate Gratitude**
3. **Chant Om** 3 times followed by Mantra

Energy Anatomy

Living in Balance: The Gunas

In Classical Yoga, karma is the interplay of 3 distinct energies. All of creation and its process of evolution can be categorized into these 3 qualities or **Gunas**. The balance of the three Guna's is vital for our health and our happiness.



Our basic nature is **Sattva** (positive creative force) with just enough Rajas (dynamic force) and **Tamas** (negative force) to bring about fruition. A Sattvic mind lends itself to clear, calm, creative thinking and allows us to create solutions. We need Rajas to implement these solutions and Tamas to bring them to an end when the solution has been resolved. To overcome the force of karma – e.g unconscious words, thoughts, actions, and to experience being established in health and in oneself, we need to follow a sattvic lifestyle with a deep connection to our diet. Food not only nourishes the body, it nourishes the mind and our conscious state.

Sattva – Light & Purity, Equilibrium, knowledge, (associated with creation)

A state of balance and harmony, peace, tranquility, sattva is the naturally arising state originating from being true to your inner teacher, guru, god. By purifying body, senses, and mind, the yogi can experience natural self.

Rajas – Activity, Passion, Action (associated with preservation)

When we identify ourselves with actions, with the roles we play in life, with praise received from others, we are in a rajasic state when the mind is identified with the concepts of karma, that which we sow and what which we reap.

Tamas – Darkness, Inertia, Lethargy, Ignorance (associated with destruction)



Darkness, ignorance, lazy nature of the mind or body, a force that tells us to take a break and relax when we are near to completing a project whose deadline is approaching – as a result we do not finish the race.

10 Tips for living a more Sattvic Lifestyle:

We can enjoy more Sattvic lifestyles through monitoring and carefully adjusting our lifestyles, with particular attention to diet, physical and mental exercise.

- 1) **Eat foods that are organic, fresh, in season, vegetarian, locally produced.** According to yogic philosophy, the mind is formed of the essence of food. If food eaten is pure then it brings inner peace to the body in and encourages spiritual progress.
- 2) **Live in harmony with the rhythms of the day and seasons.** Regulate your daily events, eating at similar times each day and sleeping at regular times to ensure that you have enough sleep 6 – 8 hours usually. “There is no possibility of one to become a yogi... if one eats too much, or eats too little, sleeps too much or does not sleep enough” – Bhagavad Gita
- 3) **Meditate/ pray as first and last events of the day**
- 4) **Sleep early, Wake and Rise before the sun** to capture the high vibrational prana, life-force energy, and delight of the glorious sunrise.
- 5) **Develop Sattvic states of mind;** calm, positivity, enthusiasm, joy, happiness, honesty, humility, flexibility, moderation, balance, gratitude, inner silence
- 6) **Engage in conscientious hard work** that contributes good and service in the world
- 7) **Always tell the truth and avoid hurting anyone’s heart**
- 8) **Study spiritual text and educational, inspirational and uplifting words**
- 9) **Listen deeply** when spoken to and offer compassionate words
- 10) **Live mindfully and in the present moment**

pure, light, sweet positive energy flow	spicy, over-stimulating, creates restless, excited mind	dull, heavy, blocks flow of prana, creates toxins
sattva	rajas	tamas
Foods that promotes purity of mind, peace, intelligence and right decisions	Foods that give us motivation. Food that keeps us attached to the ego and creates desires.	Foods that destroy our resistance to disease. Clouds the mind. Promotes negative emotions.
MILK	COFFEE/ BLACK TEA	RED MEAT
HERBAL TEA	CHICKEN	ALCOHOL
GHEE	EGGS	FAST FOOD
GRAINS	ONION/GARLIC	FRIED FOOD
FRESH SWEET FRUITS	DARK LENTILS	FROZEN FOOD
FRESH VEGGIES	CITRUS FRUITS	CANNED/STALE FOOD
HONEY	VERY SPICY FOODS	REFINED SUGARS
NUTS	CHOCOLATE	TOBACCO
MUNG BEANS	SALT	SODA
*PEACE WHILE EATING	*EATING TOO FAST	*OVEREATING

Yogic Lifestyle: Living in Balance

<u>Chakras</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>In Balance</u>	<u>Excessive/Deficient</u>	<u>Element/ Gland / Colour/ Mantra Seed Sound</u>	<u>Balancing Lifestyle Practice</u>
Muladhara Chakra: Root/ Base	Survival, Grounding, Trust, Stability (Shakti)	Courage Trust Physical strength	Depression Lethargy Self-pity Fear Un-grounded Indecisive Overly possessive Victim	Earth Adrenal Red Lam	Eat balanced nourishing, grounding, organic, whole vegetarian foods. Eat rhythmically. Eat mindfully and in quiet peaceful technology and distraction free environment
Svadihtashana a Chakra: Sacral, Naval, Hara, Dan Tien, “Sweetness”	Relationship, Sexuality, Pleasure, Feeling	Flow Adaptability Flexibility Emotionally balanced Nurturing Compassionate	Lust Greed Manipulative Controlling Submissive Martyr	Water Adrenal, Reproductive Orange Vam	Flow/Dance Be/Feel/ Witness Journal Drink Pure Water Spend time near oceans/lakes/rivers
Manipura Chakra: Solar Plexus, “Lustrous Gem”	Power, Willpower, self- esteem, vitality	Self-confidence Will power Clear direction Autonomy Energy	Apathy Restlessness Lethargy Low self-esteem Feels disliked Egotistical Self-absorbed Self-driven ambitious warrior	Fire Adrenal Yellow Gold Ram	Kapalabhati Pranayama Focus your intellect Read/Write Set Goals Make Plans Hobby Fire purification ceremony
Anahata Chakra: Heart, “unstruck sound”	Love, Equilibrium	Love Balance Affinity Unity Healing Clash-sentience Spaciousness Ease	Inappropriate emotional expression Separateness Loneliness Victim Mentality Holding on to grief/sadness/re sentment Ruthless Emotionless	Air Thymus Green Yam	Meditation Thought Alchemy Connect with Nature Love

<u>Vishuddha Chakra: Throat, "purification"</u>	Communication, Sound, Vibration, creativity	Melodious Voice Truthful speech Clear communication Telepathy Creativity Resonance	Gossip/hurtful speech Addictions Creative blocks Controlling Judgmental Lacking faith	Ether Thyroid Bright Blue Ham	Positive Vibrations & Environment 5 Elements Alter Music Chanting Mantra: Om Speak the Truth
<u>Ajna Chakra: Third Eye – "to command and receive"</u>	Intuition, Light, luminosity	Visionary Imagination Clairvoyance Intuitive Contentment Concentration Intellectual power	Psychological problems Overly analytical Overly intellectual Unclear Thoughts Deluded	Light Pineal, Pituitary, Hypothalamus Violet or White Aum	Meditation Fasting "The universe is just the way we think it is – and that's why" – John Woods
<u>Sahasrara Chakra – Crown, "Thousand Petaled Lotus"</u>	Realization, thought, cognition, spiritual connection (Shiva)	Connection to Highest Self - Spiritual Consciousness Knowing Understanding Transcending ego Psychic	Egomaniac No spiritual inspiration	Pure Consciousness Pineal Pure White None	Meditate Daily Thought alchemy

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



From Messages in Water, Masaru Emoto:



the word Angel



the word Peace



the word Spirit



the words You disgust me



the words You fool









Dosha: Elemental Constitution

Pancha Bhuta: The 5 Elements






The five elements are the building blocks of all manifest life. Everything in the world can be classified within these 5 categories, including the body, and thus we can use them as a map to help diagnose where diseases may have their roots and give indications on how to heal. The energetic interplay of these universal elements in the body affects how prana, or life force energy, moves in different ways in different people. We are all made up of a combination of the different elements in different quantities.

	Earth	Water	Fire	Air	Space
Characteristic	Structure Stable Constant Slow Unmoving Dry Heavy Nurturing Nourishing Reliable	Flowing Cool Liquid Cleansing Nourishing Connected Oily/Slimy	Transforming Purifying Hot Spreading Liquefying Intense Sharp Light Subtle Dry	Dynamic Mobile Light Movement Erratic Subtle Clear Soft	All – Encompassing Immeasurable Omnipresent Subtle Expanding Formless Soft Smooth Open
Sense Organ	Nose/Smell	Tongue/Taste	Eyes/Sight	Skin/Touch	Ears/Sound
Dominant Body System	Bones, Muscles	Plasma/blood Lymph	Digestion, Liver, Intellect	Nervous system, Mind	Etheric Body, Higher Self
Psychology	Relaxed, Content, Stubborn, Fixed	Adaptability, connection, Emotion Attachment,	Joy, Focus, Anger, Impatience	Fear, Worry	Non-attachment, aloof

	Pitta <div>   </div>	Vata <div>   </div>	Kapha <div>   </div>
Elements:	Fire & a little Water	Space & Air	Water & Earth
Seat:	Small Intestine, Liver, blood, eyes, metabolism, digestion	Large Intestine, nervous system, hollow organs	Stomach
Qualities:	Hot Sharp Light Oily Liquid Spreading Sour and Acidity, Red	Dry, Light Cold Rough Subtle Mobile Flexible Clear	Heavy Slow Cool Oily Damp Smooth Dense Soft Static Cloudy
Body:	Medium body	Thin body	Heavysset body
Personality :	Courageous, leaders, ambitious, critical, sharp but unforgiving, orderly and decisive mind, forceful manner. These people strike others as intense. Under pressure they become angry and abrupt	Nervous energy, quick, changeable mind, indecisive, vivacious, friendly, talkative, sensitive, Often unpredictable, restless, scattered like the wind. Under pressure they grow excited and anxious.	Calm, steady mind, easy-going manner. These people strike others as relaxed. Under pressure they balk and grow silent.
Functional influence:	Metabolism, intellectual, confident, enterprising, joyous and passionate	Movement, imaginative, sensitive, spontaneous, resilient, exhilarated	Structure, calm, sympathetic, courageous, forgiving, loving, resilient
Disease influence:	Inflammation, fever, excessive hunger or thirst, heartburn, rashes, acne, early balding or greying, poor eyesight, heart attacks, anger, irritability and impatience	Pain, spasms, cramps, constipation, nerve degeneration, indigestion, chills, insomnia, anxiety and depression, arthritis.	Congestion, mucous, heaviness, fluid retention, lethargy, obesity, chest colds, asthma, depression, diabetes and high cholesterol.
To Balance:	Avoid excessive heat, oil and steam, limit salt intake, eat cooling non spicy foods, drink cool drinks (not iced), engage in non-competitive physical activity, exercise during the cooler part of the day, spend time in visually calming natural environments, dominate in sweet, bitter and astringent tastes.	Keep warm, keep calm, limit raw foods, avoid cold foods, eat warm foods and spices, keep a regular routine, meditative and relaxing exercise, and dominate in sweet, sour and salty tastes.	Get plenty of exercise, avoid heavy foods, keep active, vary routine, avoid dairy foods, avoid iced food and drinks, avoid fatty and oily foods, eat light and dry foods, and dominate in bitter, astringent pungent tastes.
When Aggravated:	Drinks Alcohol and Smokes cigarettes and	Worry, mind moves fast, doesn't get enough	Takes nice long naps after meals, eats lots of

Ayurvedic Food Combining

Food Combining Guidelines

FOOD TYPE	INCOMPATIBLE WITH...
Fruit 	All other foods! Fruit is best eaten by itself at least 30 minutes before a meal or else as a snack between meals. Sweet fruit can be mixed among other sweet fruits and acidic fruits can be mixed with other acidic fruits. However, sweet fruits tend to not metabolize well with acidic or sub-acidic fruits options and should be eaten separately (i.e. oranges, pineapple or strawberries are acidic and should not be mixed with bananas, dates or raisons which are sweet). The exception to this rule is melons which are in a category of their own and should ALWAYS be eaten alone.
Legumes	Fruit, cheese, eggs, fish, milk, meat, yogurt. Legumes <i>are</i> recommended to be eaten with starches however to create a perfect protein.
Eggs	Fruit (especially melons!) , beans, cheese, fish, kitchari, MILK, meat, yogurt
Grains	Fruit, tapioca
Honey 	Honey should never be cooked, heated, baked, or boiled as this causes the molecules to become a toxic non-homogenized glue that is unrecognizable and indigestible to the body; mixed with equal amounts of ghee by weight is also considered toxic
Lemon	Cucumber, milk, tomatoes, yogurt
Milk 	BANANAS, cherries, melons, sour fruits and fruit juices; bread with yeast, fish, kitchari, meat, yogurt
Nightshades 	Cucumber, dairy products, melon; In general, <i>nightshades should be avoided by anyone with an inflammatory condition</i> such as arthritis or IBS and also minimized by one with a Pitta condition or increased fire in the body.
Tapioca	Fruit , especially banana and mango; beans, raisons , jaggery
Yogurt	Fruit, cheese, eggs, fish, hot drinks, meat, MILK, nightshades
Proteins 	Starches, high carbohydrate foods, other proteins (eat only one protein type at a time as no two proteins require the same enzymes for digestion), high fat foods as fat inhibit the secretion of the necessary enzymes needed to digest the proteins.
Starches and Grains	Proteins, high sugar foods
Vegetables	Fruit, raw veggies with cooked veggies, combines well with both starches or proteins

Reading/Viewing/Listening

This is an ever-expanding collection of some of my recommended inspirations...

Yoga Philosophy

The Yoga Sutras – Many translations
Bhagavad Gita
Light on Yoga – BKS Iyengar
Light on Pranayama – BKS Iyengar
*** Autobiography of a Yogi, The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita** – Paramahansa Yogananda
*** Words of Grace** – Ramana Maharshi
The Yamas and Niyamas – Exploring Yoga's Ethical Practice – Deborah Adele
*** Yoga for a World Out of Balance** – Michael Stone

Yoga Asana / Alignment / Movement

Anatomy Trains – Thomas Myers
***Mind, Body, Spirit** – Donna Farhi
Maps to Ecstasy, the Healing Power of Movement – Gabrielle Roth
***YinSight** – Sarah Powers
Sivananda beginner's guide to yoga - Sivanada yoga center

Ayurveda

Ayurvedic Cookbook – Amadea Morningstar & Urmila Desai
Introduction To Ayurveda – Vasant Lad
Practical Ayurveda: Secrets for Physical, Sexual & Spiritual Health- Atreya

Modern Psychology/Philosophy

Anastasia (series)– Vladimir Megre
Art of Dreaming – Carlos Castaneda
Awaken to the Giant Within – Tony Robbins
Blink, Tipping Point, Outliers – Malcom Gladwell
The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Really Are - Alan Watts
*** Change your Thoughts – Change your Life** - Dr. Wayne W. Dyer
Conversations with God – Neil Donald Walsch
Dalai Lama – Anything
Dark side of the Light Chasers – Debbie Ford
Power of Now/ A New Earth/Stillness Speaks - Eckhart Tolle

Eastern Body Western Mind/ Wheels of Time – Anodea Judith

Energy Anatomy – Carolyn Myss
*** Mans Search for Meaning** – Viktor Frankel
Many Lives, Many Masters – Brian L. Weiss
Messages from Water – Masaru Emoto
Net of Being - Alex Grey
Power of Myth – Joseph Campbell
Radical Acceptance - Tara Brach
Sacred Sounds – Alanna Kaivalya
Secret life of Plants - Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird
Sophie's World – Jostein Gaarder
Spiritual Enlightenment (trilogy) - Jed McKenna
Wisdom of the Enneagram - Don Richard Riso, Russ Hudson, and Hans-Jürgen Kratz

Holistic/Creative Lifestyle

*** The Artist's Way** – Julie Cameron
Eating Animals – Jonathan Safran Foer
Sacred Economics/ The More beautiful World our Hearts know is Possible– Charles Eisenstein
You Can Heal your Life – Louis L. Hay
Power of Habit - Charles Duhigg
War of Art - Steven Pressfield

Love

5 Love Languages – Gary Chapman
Art of Sexual Ecstasy - Margot Anand
Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment – Rachel Heller, Amir Levine
A Return to Love – Marianne Williamson
Dear Lover/ Way of the Superior Man – David Deida
Enchanted Love – Marianne Williamson
Intimacy & Solitude – Stephanie Dowrick
The Truth – Neil Strauss

Documentaries

Earthlings / Forks over Knives/ Meet your Meat / Thrive / Happy / Waking Life / What the Bleep do we know? /

Inspirational Audio/Video

Abraham Hicks, Carolyn Meiss/ David Deida/ Ted Talks – www.ted.com/