

## Hatha Yoga

Hatha yoga is an ancient hindu system of working with the human nervous system. Because it releases tension and endows one with renewed energy, far too many 20th century people, yoga teachers included, have come to look upon the venerable Indian physical science as solely an exercise for health and vitality of mind and body. It is that, but it is also much more. Hatha yoga practices are more spiritual than physical, more subtle than gross, more a means of understanding than an exotic way to relieve stress or limber up the body.

The sages who developed hatha yoga designed it as a way to gain conscious control of our life energies, a way to go within, to harmonize the external so the innermost Self could be encountered. To them, it was about states of consciousness, about living a divine life, and it was a preparation for meditation.

As you perform the asanas, concentrate on feeling the energies within the nerve currents. Sensitize yourself to knowing when the body has been in each position long enough to tune the nerve currents involved. Then shift smoothly into the next asana. It's like a dance, a deliberate, fluid dance. During all postures, inhale using the diaphragm, not the chest muscles. Do not stretch unduly or force the body. Relax into the poses. Don't worry if you can't perform them all perfectly. In time, you will find the body becoming more flexible and supple. Free the mind of thoughts and tensions. You will be more aware, more alive, more serene.

While there are many more complex hatha yoga routines, these twenty-four asanas provide a balanced system for daily use. For the simple purpose of quieting the mind in preparation for meditation, this is all you will ever need. For best results, hatha yoga should be taught personally by a qualified teacher. These instructions and drawings are meant only as a rudimentary aid. For more elaborate regimens, inquire at a recognized school specializing in hatha yoga.

The scene of hatha yoga has a spiritual purpose - to balance physical and psychic energies in preparation for meditation. It is not only meant to make us young, beautiful or creative, but to aid us in quieting the mind, body and emotions that we may awaken enlightened consciousness & know the Self within.