

## BASIC ASANA SEQUENCE FOR NEW STUDENTS:

Through this manual, I have tried to collect the fundamentals of creating a safe practice of Ashtanga and Hatha yoga at home.

All the asanas (postures) are suitable for beginners and are ideally practice in this order, preparing the body for what is next to come.

Remember that with practice and consistency everything is coming, so do not rush or push your body for what is nor ready to achieve yet. However, keep challenging yourself each day and try to maintain as well as develop with this practice.

It is always much more beneficial and safer to practice with the guidance of a well knowledgeable teacher, but this does not mean that home practice is not an option. It is also beneficial enough and important in evolving as well as adapting ourselves through this time of change.

Make sure you read all the information below as many times as it needs to have a practice that your mind and body deserves.

Namaste x

This booklet was put together in collaboration with one of our excellent teachers; Yiouli Spanoude.

Yiouli is a qualified Ashtanga-Vinyasa 200 RYS teacher and encourages all new students to attend her online classes with us at the UoS Yoga and Pilates Society on Friday's at 6.30pm (UoS students only). But as well as this she encourages all others to contact her for advice and guidance for her practice.

Email - [spanoudeyiouli@yahoo.com](mailto:spanoudeyiouli@yahoo.com)

Spotify – yioulisp



## FUNDAMENTALS OF ASHTANGA AND HATHA YOGA

### PRANAYAMA-BREATH:

The breath that is used during Ashtanga Yoga practice and most of the times in other yoga traditions is 'Ujjayi Pranayama', meaning victorious breath. The duration of breath in the inhalation and the exhalation is supposed to be even, long but smooth enough.

Instructions of understanding and practising Ujjayi Pranayama:

1. Sit comfortably in a cross-legged position or easy position and close your eyes. Connect to your natural rhythm of the breath and try to count the duration of your inhalation and the exhalation.
2. When done so, try to make the length of inhaling and exhaling naturally equal.
3. After you have done so, imagine you want to sip the breath in through a straw. This sound is created with gentle constriction of the opening of the throat creating a resistance of the pathway of air.
4. With this slight constriction you slightly pull the breath in during the inhalation and out during the exhalation, creating a smooth constriction, like the sound of the ocean.
5. Once you manage to master the breath by consistent practice, you will then try to equalise the duration of the breath of both the inhalation and the exhalation.

**TIP:** you can place your first finger in the middle of the trachea and by inhaling you should feel an inward movement creating a hole.

### VINYASA-LINKING MOVEMENT:

Although many times in the West we do call Vinyasa a style of yoga, in the tradition of Ashtanga and Hatha yoga is basically the dynamic movement between the different asanas (postures) practice.

The synchronisation of breath and dynamic movements of vinyasas between the asanas is of primary focus as it creates deeper awareness during the practice as well as increasing heart rate and detoxifying the body through sweat.

Instructions for Vinyasas between asanas:

1. In between asanas, vinyasas are taken- with breathing- as mentioned above, usually in the following series:

Inhale to Plank pose → Exhale to Chaturanga or Knees Chest Chin pose →

Inhale to Upward-Facing Dog or Cobra pose → Exhale to Downward-Facing Dog

2. Remember the purpose of Vinyasa is to create as well as maintain heat within the body during the practice thus is taken between alternative sides of the body of the same asana.



### NEW TO YOGA - ASANA PRACTICE:

The asanas below are an awesome way to start your home practice if you are new to Ashtanga or Hatha yoga. Please do follow them in this order as each one is a preparation of what follows.

Once you create a smooth flow of these movements start holding each asana for a longer period of breaths (5 breath cycles), preferably Ujjayi pranayama.

As you are practicing at home without a guidance and the help of a teacher do your best in trying to be mindful and listening to your body's needs. Each day is different and some days we can be more powerful and some others calmer.

Whatever you do just try to be consistent as this is the key to gain all the benefits from our practice.

## 1.EASY POSE-SUKHASANA



---

### Cuing:

1. Cross right shin over the left shin with knees directly over each other and with the sitting bones directly below you.
- 2.The sacrum is drawn inwardly towards the naval and the spine is lifted, straight with the chest open.
- 3.Rest the hand on the knees and preferably with palms facing upwards.
- 4.Connect to yourself by doing at least 5-10 cycles of breath.

### Benefits:

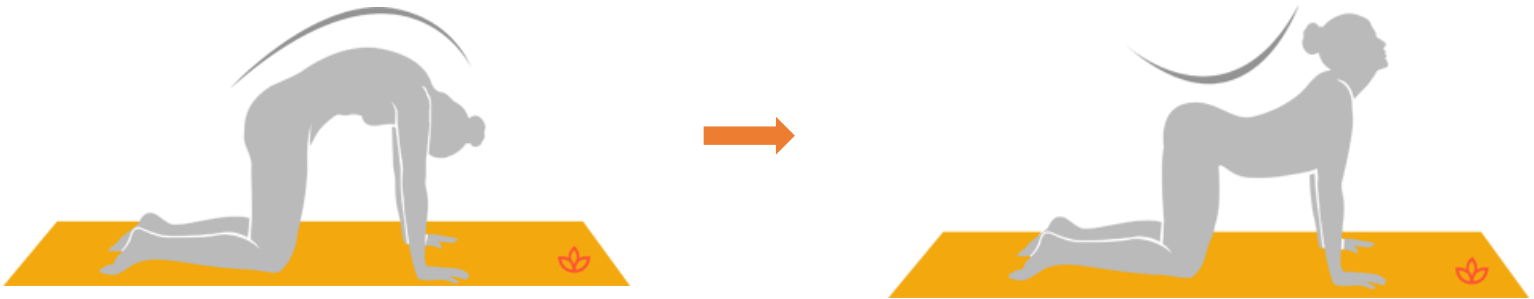
Grounding.

Gentle opening of the hips and strengthening of the spine.

Tip: In case of lower back pain or not completely straight spine, use a cushion or a folded blanket to beneath the hips or knees if there is a slight sensitivity in knees.

---

## 2. CAT-COW POSE – MARJARYASANA-BITILASANA



---

Cuing:

CAT POSE:

1. Place your hands and feet in a tabletop position with legs, hips width apart and knees directly under the hips as well as elbows and shoulders in line.
2. With an exhalation round your spine towards the ceiling with the head relaxed and gaze towards the floor.

COW POSE:

3. With the next inhalation lift your sitting bones towards the ceiling with the belly engaged towards the floor. Your head is looking forward.
4. Repeat for a total of 5-10 breath cycles.

Benefits: These two asanas paired together for a gentle vinyasa massage the belly and the internal organs as well as warming up the spine and neck.

---

### 3.DONWARD FACING DOG-ADHO MUKHA SVANASANA-

---



#### Cuing:

1. As you are on all fours position, with an inhalation lift your knees off the floor, coming into downward facing dog. Knees are slightly bended and heels a bit off the floor.
2. Your toes are pressing towards the floor rolling inwardly your upper inner thighs. The sit bones are facing the ceiling and your belly is engaged with your gaze at your naval.
3. The fingers are tightly pressing the floor with thumb and index finger creating an "L" shape.
4. The lower forearms are slightly outwardly rotated with the upper arms and shoulders coming slightly towards the centre of the body.
5. Stay here for at least 3 cycles of breath.

Benefits: Bring a sense of calmness to the body as more blood flows towards the head and strengthens the arms and legs.

#### TIP:

You can hold a 2-3 breath cycle plank position to warm up the core before this asana.  
You can create a smooth vinyasa by moving from downward facing dog back to cat and cow.

#### 4.INTENSE SIDE STRETCH/ PYRAMID POSE -PARSVOTTANASANA-



---

##### Cuing:

1. Transition from downward facing dog. With an exhalation turn the left foot from 90 degrees slightly inside and bring the right leg towards the nose and placing the right foot between the hands.

The space between the feet is greater than hips opening but not very wide.

2. With firm fingers or palms on the floor and squared hips and pelvis towards the front of the mat. Lean your torso towards the floor in a parallel position.

3. Stay here for at least 3 cycles of breaths and each time try to find comfort and length within this asana by bringing the torso closer to the thigh.

4. Alternate sides by moving through a vinyasa from this asana back to downward facing dog.

##### Benefits:

Stretches hips, thighs and hamstrings.

Stimulates the abdominal organs.

Tip: If your hands are not touching the floor use 2 blocks or 2 books to gain some height.

---

## 5.WARRIOR I-VIRABHADRASANA I



### Cuing:

1. Transition from downward facing dog. With an exhalation turn the left foot 45 degrees and bring the right leg towards the nose and placing the right foot between the hands.

The space between the feet is greater than hips opening and wider than in parsvottanasana with heel to heel alignment.

2. Bending the front knee 90 degrees with the back heel fully anchored to the floor with strong engaged legs and squared hips.

3. With an inhalation engage the core, lift your hands up towards the ceiling, connecting the palms firmly and

3. The ribcage is away from the pelvis and the gaze is towards the thumbs.

3. Stay here for at least 3 cycles of breaths and each time try to find comfort and length within this asana by going deeper into the pose.

4. Alternate sides by moving through a vinyasa from this asana back to downward facing dog.

### Benefits:

Stretches hips, thighs and hamstrings.

Strengthens shoulders, legs and ankles.

## 6.CHAIR POSE-UTKATASANA-



### Cuing:

1. From downward facing dog step at the front of your mat, with the big toes to touch and heels connected.

2. Inhaling, raise your arms towards the ceiling with palms parallel to each other.

3. Exhale and bend your knees in a squat position. The knees will project the big toes. Your naval is drawn in and the back is long

4. Stay for at least 3 cycles of breaths and return to standing with big toes to touch (mountain position).

### Benefits:

Stimulates abdominal organs.

Strengthens calves, thighs and spine.



## 7.HAPPY BABY POSE-ANANDA BALASANA-



---

### Cuing:

1. From standing at the top of your mat, come to seated, then lay on your back and with an exhalation draw your knees towards your chest.
2. Grasp the outer edge of each foot with the hand of the same side, and open the knees to the. The ankles are directly over the knees with the shins perpendicular to the floor.
3. Slowly start pulling with the hands the knees towards the floor and at the same time push with your feet against the palms. This will create resistance.
4. Stay here for at least 3-5 cycles of breath. Trying to find comfort as you go deeper into the asana.

### Benefits:

Calms the brain preparing for the final relaxation-savasana-  
Gently stretches the spine and the inner groins and hips.

---

## 8.CORPSE POSE-SAVASANA-



---

This is the final pose of each yoga practice, aiming to calm the mind and integrate the effects of our practice through this final relaxation. It is much more challenging than it seems but once you find ease and total release within this asana it can be one of the most beneficial. The body should be in a neutral position and the breath control here is released.

### Cuing:

- 1.Lay on the floor with from a seated position with the knees bended.
2. With an inhalation straighten your right leg first and then the left releasing both legs on the outer edge of each side of the mat.
3. Release the neck on the mat with chin slightly tilted towards the chest. The head can also be supported on a folded blanket.
- 4.Release the arms on the floor, with palms resting next to your body and facing towards the ceiling.
- 5.Start releasing tension on each part of the body, by concentrating in the natural rhythm of your breath. This will help quieting not only the physical but also the mental part of the body.
- 6.Try staying in this position for at least 10 minutes, being fully aware of the present and trying not to fall asleep. If you do so is totally normal, and you can just come back to the present by refocusing on the breath.

### Benefits:

- Lowers blood pressure.
- Releases tension and relaxes mind and body.
- Release feeling of fatigue

### TIP:

- As the mind and body relaxes, our temperature usually lowers, so make sure you do have a blanket next to you to cover yourself.
  - Feel as much comfortable as you need in this final asana.
-