

# Suryanamaskar

## A Salute to the Sun

One of my very first introductions to yoga was the sun-salutation pictured here and it remains one of my favorite asana. Some call it the most traditional series in hatha yoga. It provides a good selection of the basic yoga—nutrients for the body: forward folds, back bends and lunges, for groin and quadriceps lengthening, arm strength and approachable inversions in the downward facing dog.

Follow steps 1 through 12 and the corresponding breathing. Move through the positions as many times as you feel comfortable. A 15-minute session in the morning with this series is a great way to begin your day. Focusing on your breath and moving through the series several times can move this into an aerobic realm and can allow the mind to release without having to think about what to do next. There are many modifications to choose from as you become familiar with the series (a couple of options are shown here).

There are other versions of suryanamaskar, each exploring and emphasizing different aspects of movement, lengthening, lines of energy and strength.

Here are a few suggestions for you as you move through these postures:

- Take your time
- When you rush from one step to the next there is a great possibility you will miss something along the way.
- Maintain constant awareness of your breath. It is the consciousness of your practice. As the breath rises and falls with each movement develop your powers of objective observation. What are you feeling, not only physically, but emotionally as well, and what thoughts arise and fall with your breath?
- Be willing to explore

As you become more comfortable with the flow of the salutation break out of the mode occasionally – add postures that you learn from other sources, and intuit some of your own. Try to maintain a continuous flow? How do you think these asana were developed in the first place – limitless imagination, of course.

For those wanting to expose themselves more to the many asanas available, of course taking a class would be highly recommended. Starting out your yoga library with the following books on asana and philosophy as related to the asana will also enhance your experience. Yoga the Iyengar Way (authors Silva, Mira, and Shyam Mehta). Yoga—the Spirit and Practice of Moving into Stillness by Eric Schiffman. the Sivananda Companion to Yoga published by Simon and Schuster. All of these have great illustrations and photos on the asana as well as clear and concise directions on achieving each posture. ①

# Le Guru is You!

