

# DEFINITION OF INTEGRAL YOGA HAṬHA

Integral Yoga Haṭha is a comprehensive system for personal transformation—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Each class incorporates postures, deep relaxation, breathing practices, and meditation that result in a profound experience of peace and well-being. Students of any age and condition are encouraged to explore each posture at their own pace with mindfully observing what arises without judgment. By balancing effort and surrender, the practitioner is able to discover the optimal flow of energy to achieve greater flexibility, strength, poise, and mental focus. Besides promoting the health of all the systems in the body, the Integral Yoga system is designed to draw the practitioner into a physical and mental stillness that leads to an experience of one's true nature, which is ever peaceful and happy.

## **Purpose of the Individual Practices**

The teacher sets the tone, showing students how to move meditatively through the entire Haṭha class, harmoniously deepening an awareness of peace and body/mind/spirit unity. The following is a summary of each of the individual practices that make up the Integral Hatha Yoga class:

- Intro/Centering: To calm and focus the body and mind, raise energy and allow the mind to turn inward. Establish intention of peace during the gross practices.
- Netra Vyāyāmam: To turn the senses inward, and relax the eyes.
- Sūrya Namaskāram: To bring awareness to the entire body and prepare the body for what follows: All āsanās stimulate, stretch, tone and strengthen.
- Back Bends: To stimulate the sympathetic nervous system; energizing and activating eliminative processes.
- Forward Bends: To stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system; to counterbalance the body following the back bends. To calm the mind and go inward. To experience surrender.
- Inversions: To bring balance and promote/maintain the healthy functioning of all the systems of the body, positively affecting the entire physical organism. To change the mental state by changing perspective on the world.
- Spinal Twists: To tone the sympathetic nervous system, bring fresh supply of blood to each vertebra of the spine, and release toxins from the intestines.
- Yoga Mudrā: Emphasizes and deepens inward awareness and is a transition to subtle practices.
- Yoga Nidrā: To allow all of the benefits of the Haṭha session to be assimilated. A guided meditation to further connect with the Witness and to bring awareness to the koshas. To set the tone for the subtle practices.
- Prāṇāyāma: To calm and purify the nervous system, purify the blood, balance both hemispheres of the brain, and increase vitality in the whole system. To connect with prāṇa and draw the mind inward, preparing for concentration and meditation.
- Meditation: To transcend the mind and reconnect with the true Self.