Ashtanga Yoga Asana Practise Sheets

Part 1: Suryanamaskaras, Standing Sequence, Primary Series, Backbends, Finishing Sequence

www.ashtangaphilippa.com

Copyright © Philippa Asher 2015
Said to have been first described in an ancient text called *Yoga Korunta*, Ashtanga Yoga is a disciplined practice of the body and mind, whose aim is to discover our True Self and thus live in harmony with the Universe. It's about manifesting a rhythmic flow of energy and awareness, that enables us to feel connected, whilst promoting good health and heightened spiritual, physical and emotional well-being.

Around two thousand years ago, the Indian sage *Patanjali* composed a work called *Yoga Sutras*, which attempts to outline and standardise Classical Yoga. Expounding upon *Raja Yoga* (how to redefine the mind to serve our needs), Patanjali's underlying principle is the Eight Limbs of Classical Yoga, which can lead to liberation.

These eight limbs are: *Yamas* (ethical behavioural codes: *ahimsa* non-violence; *satya* truth; *asteya* not stealing; *brahmacharya* appropriate sexual conduct; *aparigraha* non-greed); *Niyamas* (personal behavioural observances: *saucha* cleanliness of body and mind; *santosa* contentment with what one has; *tapas* austerities and disciplines; *svadhyaya* self study; *isvara pranidhana* surrender and acceptance without expectation); *Asana* (postural practice, to detoxify and open the body and mind); *Pranayama* (vital life force, or breath control and expansion); *Pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses from external stimulation); *Dharana* (concentration of the mind); *Dhyana* (meditation; focusing the mind on a single entity) and *Samadhi* (a higher state of conscious awareness, where the mind goes beyond the object of meditation and the individual self).

Ashtanga means eight limbs, thus each of these four external and four internal disciplines make up the Ashtanga Yoga practice. For most people, the easiest way to access Ashtanga Yoga, is via the postural practice (the third limb).

The asana method is characterised by the powerful, synchronised breathing and movement system (*vinyasa*); gaze points (*dristi*) and internal energy locks (*bandhas*). The asanas are gracefully linked together using *Vinyasa Sequences* based on *Suryanamaskara A*. The aim of the Ashtanga asana practice is to attain the perfect alignment of the breath, driti and movement (known as *tristhana*) and through doing so, develop a moving meditation. Throughout the practice, very slow inhalations and exhalations through the nose, allow *prana* (vital energy) to be carried around the subtle body. Coupled with the correct execution of *tristhana*, stagnant energy in the *nadi* (energy channels) and around the *chakras* (energy centres), will be freed and physical or mental disturbances, dissolved.

Through regular practise of a precise sequence of flowing asanas, the body becomes flexible, powerful and light; toxins are removed and the blood cleaned. Many ailments may be improved. Slow controlled breathing and deep concentration create incredible focus and a strong quiet mind, resulting in a feeling of calmness and peace.

In today's asana system (in the tradition of Sri K Pattabhi Jois) there are six series of Ashtanga Yoga asanas: Primary (*Yoga Chikitsa*) to detoxify, balance, open and strengthen the body; Intermediate (*Nadi Sodhana*) to purify the nervous system; Advanced A, B, C and D (*Sthira Bhaga Samapta*) to demonstrate high levels of strength, flexibility, grace and humility. When one asana is mastered in a controlled graceful manner (with calm deep breathing), the next is added until a complete series is practised regularly. The format of the practice comprises the *Suryanamaskara Sequences*; the *Standing Sequence*; whichever "Series" the practitioner is working on; *Backbends* and the *Finishing Sequence*. It takes most people, many years to master the *Primary Series*, with its surrounding sections.

With time (as the body and mind purify, grow stronger and become more open), the other aspects of Ashtanga Yoga transpire organically, allowing us to find our true nature and connection to the Universe.

The home of Ashtanga Yoga in the tradition of Sri K Pattabhi Jois, is the *KPJ Ashtanga Yoga Institute* in Mysore, South India. kpjayi.org  Asanas shown where Philippa is wearing long leggings, are for Intermediate / Advanced Series practitioners only.
Vinyasa Sequences

(synchronised movement & breathing sequences, that gracefully link asanas together)

(F) = Full Vinyasa: takes the form of Suryanamaskara A, until jumping or stepping into the state of the next asana eg: before "Utkatasana"

(S) = Samasthithi: ‘equal standing’ or neutral position eg: the first asana of “Full Vinyasa"

(H) = Half Vinyasa: uses the middle section of Suryanamaskara A, from jumping into Chaturanga, until jumping or stepping into the next asana eg: after "Utkatasana" lift up & jump back

(V) = Vinyasa from Sitting: jumping back & jumping through eg: after "Pascimattanasana C or D"

(C) = Chakrasana: vinyasa from lying down eg: after "Supta Padangusthasana"
Suryanamaskara A & B
(5 of each)

A (x 5)
dristi: 1. ekam inhale thumbs
2. dve exhale
3. trini inhale
4. catvari exhale
5. panca inhale
6. sat exhale navel (5 breaths)
7. sapta inhale
8. astau exhale
9. nava inhale thumbs

B (x 5)
dristi: 1. ekam inhale thumbs
2. dve exhale
3. trini inhale
4. catvari exhale
5. panca inhale
6. sat exhale navel
7. sapta inhale thumbs
8. astau exhale
9. nava inhale
10. dasa exhale dristi: navel
11. ekadasa inhale thumbs
12. dvadasa exhale
13. trayodasa inhale
14. caturdasa exhale navel (5 breaths)
15. pancadasa inhale
16. sodasa exhale
17. saptdasa inhale thumbs
(S)
Standing Sequence

1. "Padangusthasana" inhale (5 breaths)
2. "Padahastasana" inhale (5 breaths)
3. "Utthita Trikonasana A" (5 breaths)
4. "Utthita Trikonasana B" (5 breaths)
5. "Utthita Parsvakonasana A" (5 breaths)
6. "Utthita Parsvakonasana B" (5 breaths)
7. "Prasarita Padottanasana A, B, C, D" (5 breaths)
8. "Parsvottanasana" inhale (5 breaths)
9. "Uttita Hasta Padangusthasana" exhale (5 breaths)
10. "Ardha Baddha Padmottanasana" inhale (5 breaths)
11. "Utkatasana" inhale (5 breaths)
12. "Virabhadrasana A" inhale (5 breaths)
13. "Virabhadrasana B" inhale (5 breaths)
First Half of Primary Series

“Dandasana”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Pascimottanasana A, B, C, D”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Purvottanasana”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Ardha Baddha Padma Pascimottanasana”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Triyanga Mukhaikapada Pascimottanasana”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Janu Sirsasana A”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Janu Sirsasana B”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Janu Sirsasana C”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Maricasana B”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

“Navasana”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
toes

repeat 4 more times

“Maricasana C”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
right

“Maricasana D”
(5 breaths)
drīṣṭi:
left

www.ashtangaphilippa.com
Driti nose, unless otherwise stated

Second Half of Primary Series

*Bhujapidasana* (5 breaths)
*Garbha Pindasana* (5 breaths)
*Upavistha Konasana A, B* (5 breaths)
*Uttaya Padangusthasana* (5 breaths)

*Inhale* 

*Bakasana* (V)
*Kukutasana* (5 breaths)

*Inhale* 

*Kurmasana* (5 breaths) third eye or nose

*Inhale* 

*Supta Kurmasana* (5 breaths)
*Upavistha Konasana* (5 breaths) third eye or nose

*Inhale* 

*Supra Konasana* (5 breaths)
*Urdhva Mukha Pascimattanasana* (5 breaths) up

*Exhale* 

*Baddha Konasana* (5 breaths)

*Inhale* 

*Supta Padangusthasana* (5 breaths) toe

*Exhale* 

*Drstri* left

*Inhale* 

*Exhale* toe

*Inhale up* 

*Exhale* up

*Inhale up* 

*Exhale* up

*Inhale* 

*Exhale* toe

*Supta Padangusthasana* (5 breaths)

*Exhale* 

*Setu Bandhasana* (5 breaths)
Backbends

*Chakrasana* & jump through to *Paschimottanasana* or STAND UP from third *Urdhva Dhanurasana* for *Drop Backs*

1. *Urdhva Dhanurasana*
   - Exhale
   - Inhale up (5 breaths)
   - Exhale
   - Inhale up (5 breaths)
   - Exhale
   - Inhale up (5 breaths)
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - See note above

2. *Drop Backs* 3 times
   - Inhale
   - Exhale (3 times)
   - Inhale
   - Exhale (nose or floor)

3. *Drop Over* (optional)
   - Inhale
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - Exhale

4. *Viparita Chakrasana* (optional) 3 times
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - Exhale

5. *Tarakasana* (optional)
   - Inhale
   - (5 breaths)
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - Exhale

6. *Tirlieng Mukha Uttanasana* (optional)
   - Inhale
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - (5 breaths)

7. *Pascimottanasana*
   - Inhale
   - Exhale
   - Inhale
   - (10 breaths)
Finishing Sequence

“Salamba Sarvangasana” (10-25 breaths)
“Halasana” (8-10 breaths)
“Karna Pidasana” (8-10 breaths)
“Urdhva Padmasana” (8-10 breaths)
“Pindasana” (8-10 breaths)

“Matsyasana” (8-10 breaths)
“Uttana Padasana” (8-10 breaths)
“Sirsasana” (15-25 breaths)
in (optional) (10 breaths)
“Balasana” (8-10 breaths)

“Baddha Padmasana”
inhale
dristi:

“Yoga Mudra” (10 breaths)
nose or third eye

“Padmasana” (10-25 breaths)

“Utpluthih” (10 breaths)

Take Rest
eyes closed
Opening invocation

Om
Vande GURUNAM CHARANARAVINDE
SANDARSI TA SVATMA SUKAVA BODHE
NIH SREYASE JANGALIKAYAMANE
SAMSARA HALAHALA MOHASANTYAI
ABAHU PURUSAKARAM
SANKHACAKRASI DHARINAM
SAHASRA SIRASAM SVATAM
PRANAMAMI PATANJALIM

Om
I bow to the lotus feet of our great teacher
who uncovers our true self and awakens happiness.

Like a Jungle physician, he brings complete well-being
and can heal the poison of conditioned existence and illusion.

His torso is human. Carrying a conch,
a discus and a sword,

having a thousand bright heads,
I bow to Patanjali

Om

Closing chant (Mangala Mantra)

Om
SVASTI Prajabhayah Paripalayantam
Nyayena Marga Nama Mahima Mahisah
Go Brahmanebhayah Subhamasti Nityam
Loka Hamastah Sukhino Bhavantu
Om Santih Santih Santih

Om
May all be well with mankind. May all the leaders of the world
protect in every way, that keeps to the right path.

May there be goodness for those who know the earth to be sacred.

May all the worlds be happy.

Om, Peace, peace, peace