

1 The Art & Science of Yogaflow®

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TriYoga represents the harmonious flow of the triple principal that is inherent in all creation. The universal energy manifests as the trinity in infinite ways beginning with the triple energies of the soul, sat cit ananda (existence, knowledge, bliss).

For the universal energy to effortlessly flow, the trinity form needs to be balanced. Yoga practice harmonizes the trinity, allowing the energy to flow. This heightened energy flow awakens consciousness to greater levels of awareness.

The essence of sadhana is to surrender to the universal flow. Whatever means or method one uses, the universal life-energy, prana, requires the freedom to flow. Only through the flow does it have the power to cleanse, maintain, and transform the practitioner.

Ancient yogis focused on the universal trinity by using Sri Cakra, which consists of a centered triangle surrounded by 42 other triangles, as their yantra. Their original deity was trimurti, with three forms: Brahma, the creator; Visnu, the sustainer, and Siva the transformer. Their feminine expression for this was Sarasvati (knowledge); Laksmi, (bliss); and Kali (purification). The different forms of the trinity were called by various names, but it was still a reflection of the universal trinity.

Various yoga methods may focus on a particular trinity. For example, in the practice of pranayama, yogis focus on the flow of inhalation, breath retention, and exhalation. In mantra yoga, the trinity is sound, form, and meaning. In philosophy, it is union of body, mind, and spirit.

In the same way, hatha yoga is based on the trinity of asana, pranayama, and mudra. To awaken the energy through this form of yoga, this trinity needs to flow as one.

Yogasana

The core spinal alignment has four curves. The lumbar and cervical spine curve inward, and the sacrum and thoracic spine curve outward. In addition to this natural alignment, when the back appears straight, the spine has four primary directional movements: flexion (forward bend), extension (backward bend), rotation, and lateral. To maintain the flow from one posture to another, the spine moves from one of these four directional movements or remains in the core alignment.

When flowing between a backward bend to a forward bend, the spine rolls vertebra by vertebra, either ascending or descending, while following the natural wave of the spine. To maintain the flow, a backward bend (extension) is entered through a forward bend (flexion) and a forward bend is entered through a backward bend. An example would be the two movements of Cat Pose. In Cat Pose the spine is in a gentle extension. While

exhaling, one begins at the base of spine, rolling vertebra by vertebra into a flexion or tucked position. To return to Cat, one begins at the base of spine, flowing from the spinal flexion, vertebra by vertebra, back into the gentle backward bend.

In addition to the spinal wave, the whole body flows. To sustain the flow, one maintains relaxation-in-action and common alignments between the two postures. One connects, flows, and dissolves each posture into the next, moving only what needs to move in order to conserve energy. To give the feeling of equilibrium, or to feel the flow of energy, one extends equally in four directions: north, south, east, and west.

Precise alignments support the natural alignment of the skeleton system. With this strong foundation, the body relaxes in the flow. When one enters the flow, prana increases, awakening the inner flow.

Pranayama

Prana is derived from pra, meaning “continuous” and na, meaning “movement.”

One maintains a rhythmic svara (breath flow). As the air flows, the body relaxes and the mind calms. The body and the breath are synchronized so the movement has an even, graceful, rhythmic tempo. The flow of air is the same throughout puraka (inhalation) and recaka (exhalation), not speeded up or slowed down.

One allows the length of the breath to extend, as stretching the breath increases the life energy allowing for fewer breaths per minute. Yogis claim that decreasing the amount of breaths per minute increases the life span. Animals that breathe more breaths per minute have a shorter life span; those that take fewer breaths per minute live longer.

The breath flow with the flowing postures should be the samata vayu ratio of 1 - 1. During sustained postures the breath is the 1 - 2 ratio. This flow of 1 - 2 corresponds to the heartbeat activity-to-rest ratio: 1 - 2 (rest is twice the length of contraction). Inhalation is the active phase of respiration and exhalation corresponds to rest. Before establishing these ratios, one first makes the breath smooth, even, and without interruptions or jerks.

Mudra

Mudra assists inner communication, like hand gestures assist outer communication. Hasta (hand) mudras are either sustained or flow one into the next. Synchronized hasta mudras with posture and breath, seal and focus the trinity energies.

One of the main hasta mudras to use with the postures is jnana mudra. The first (thumb) and second fingertips touch. The remaining three released fingers symbolize sat cit ananda. There are many hasta mudras to use with yoga practice.

When the eyes are open, one uses the eye mudra of trataka, a relaxed steady gaze at one point. When eyes are closed, one uses Bhramadhya Mudra with the eyes focused at ajna Cakra (space between eyebrows). Ultimately these eye mudras direct the flow of energy upward.

Through the flow of yogasana, pranayama, and mudra, prana becomes balanced giving the foundation of all physical, mental, and spiritual accomplishments. The essence is in the flow. As the river flows into the ocean, we flow in and from the source.