



CLASSICAL HATHA YOGA · AS STRUCTURED BY SADHGURU

Food, Body & Energy

Classical Hatha Yoga for a body that feels alive



How alive and wakeful you are is how energetic you
are.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A few pages a day

This booklet goes with the free five-day course “Food, body & energy” on yogavani.in. It gathers what Sadhguru says about food, the body and energy — and about Classical Hatha Yoga, which is what this is really about.

Everything in quotation is his, word for word from his published articles and talks. Nothing has been added and nothing improved upon. Where each passage comes from is listed at the back, by page.

Read a few pages a day. Keep the practice going. And when you are ready, learn Hatha Yoga the way it is meant to be learnt — from a teacher, in a room.



01

What you came with

Food, water, air and sunlight become the energy we live on. Sadhguru asks us to notice how the body actually responds to them.

One level of energy is the food that you eat, the water that you drink, the air that you breathe and the sunlight that you receive. These things become the day-to-day energy that you experience. Another way of looking at it is that what you call “life” or what you call “myself” is energy. How alive and wakeful you are is how energetic you are. The ability to convert food, water, air and whatever other inputs go into your system will be different in different people.

What kind of food you eat should depend not on what you think about it, or on your values and ethics, but on what the body wants. Food is about the body. Ask the body with what kind of food it is really happy. Try different foods and see how your body feels after eating it. If your body feels very agile and energetic, that means the body is happy.

How much sleep your body needs depends on the level of physical activity you perform. There is no need to fix the quantum of either food or sleep. When your activity levels are low, you eat less. When they are high, you may eat more. The same goes for sleep. The moment the body is well rested it will get up, whether at 3 AM or 8 AM. Your body should not wake up to an alarm bell. Once it feels sufficiently rested, it must come awake.

Food is about the body.



SADHGURU



02

It is not what you think it is

Almost everything sold as yoga today is something else, and some of it does harm. This has to be cleared up before anything else.

Now yoga means not just about twisting your body; not about standing on your head; not about holding your breath; all these things a circus artist can do better than most yogis.

Unfortunately if you utter the word yoga, people think you have to be in some impossible posture. Yoga is not about postures; it is just a miniscule aspect of yoga. Yoga means in your experience, everything has become one. The word yoga means union.

Understanding the mechanics of the body, creating a certain atmosphere, and then using the body or body postures to drive your energy in specific directions is what Hatha Yoga or yogasanas are about. Hatha yoga is not exercise.

If fitness is what you are seeking, if you want six-pack abs or whatever number, I would say go and play tennis or hike in the mountains. Yoga is not an exercise, it has other dimensions attached to it. A different dimension of fitness – yes – you get health out of it, but not six-pack abs. If you are doing yoga to burn calories or tone up your muscle, obviously you are doing improper yoga, there is no question about that.

Yoga needs to be practiced in a very subtle, gentle way, not in a forceful muscle building way, because this is not about exercise.

Yoga is not about postures; it is just a miniscule
aspect of yoga.

SADHGURU

A lot of people who have done improper yoga have lost their mental balance. This is not because yoga is dangerous. Stupidity has always been a dangerous thing on the planet. You do something stupid, it will cause damage to you.

Like never before, distortions are also happening to yoga. Serious distortions. Most ridiculous distortions are happening.

But if improper, distorted kind of yoga spreads, in fifteen years' time, scientific studies will clearly come out and tell you in how many ways it is harmful to human beings, and that will be the downfall.



03

What you are carrying

Sadhguru rarely begins with yoga. He begins with what a human being actually is — and once that is seen, the rest follows on its own.

I am sure almost all of you are carrying an instrument, some kind of electronic instrument, a phone at least, the more you know about this phone, the better you can use it, is that so?

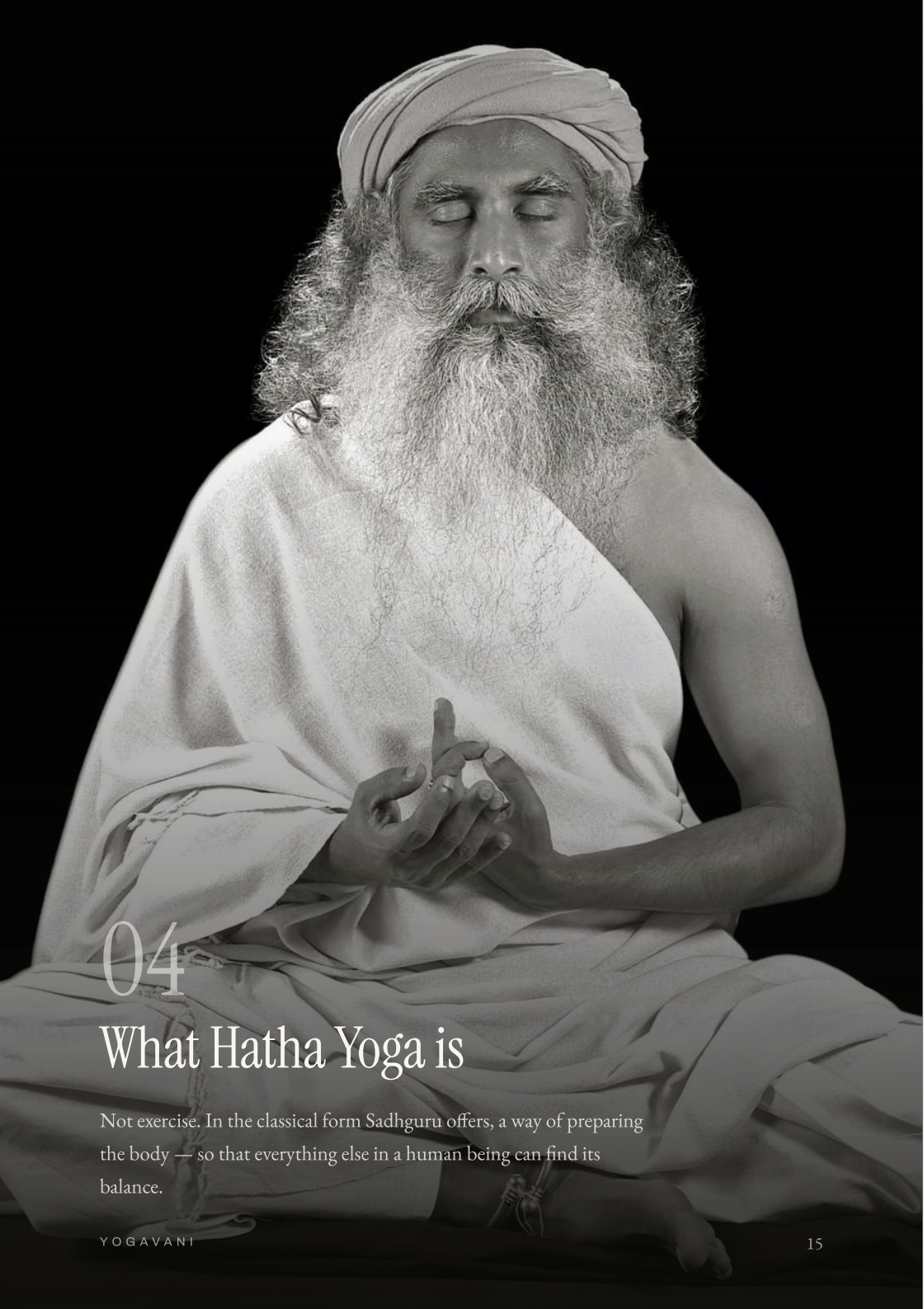
They made a survey and they have found out that 97% of the people are using only 7% of the capabilities that are there in an ordinary phone.

How much percentage, do you think, are you employing this gadget? Just make a guess. Hmm? How much percentage? Two, five, you are being very generous to yourself. It's well below one percent, because, for your survival process to conduct your life in the material world, you do not even need one percent of what this is. This is capable of perceiving the whole cosmos.

If you look at this human being that you are without emotional attachment, not as "myself" but as a mechanism, you will see it is the most sophisticated machine on the planet. And what are you manufacturing this with? You eat a fruit, let's say a banana, it goes inside and within one-and-a-half to two hours, this banana turns into a human being.

When it comes to chemistry, this human mechanism is the most sophisticated chemical factory on the planet. The question is only whether you a great manager or a lousy manager of this chemistry. Yoga means that you become a very efficient manager of your own chemical factory.

The physical body has a whole memory structure. If you are willing to read this physical body, everything – how this cosmos evolved from nothingness to this point – is written into this body. When you do asanas, you are opening up that memory and trying to restructure this life towards an ultimate possibility. If hata yoga is taught in a proper atmosphere, it is a fantastic process of shaping your system into a fantastic vessel, a fabulous device to receive the Divine.



04

What Hatha Yoga is

Not exercise. In the classical form Sadhguru offers, a way of preparing the body — so that everything else in a human being can find its balance.

Hatha yoga is a preparatory process of yoga. The word “ha” means sun, “ta” means moon. “Hatha” means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon in you, or the Pingala and Ida in you. You can explore Hatha yoga in ways that take you beyond certain limitations, but fundamentally, it is a physical preparation – preparing the body for a higher possibility.

The body is a very large part of who you are right now. The science of using the body to hasten your evolutionary process is hatha yoga. The body itself has its own attitudes, its own ego, its own nature. Let us say you decided, “Starting tomorrow, I will get up at five in the morning and go for a walk.” You set the alarm. The alarm rings. You want to get up, but your body says, “Shut up and sleep.” It has its own way, doesn’t it? Hatha yoga is a way of working with the body, a way of disciplining, purifying and preparing the body for higher levels of energy and possibilities.

Everything that you have will go into maintaining the body. This is the nature of the body. Keeping it well is not about beauty or flaunting it in front of someone else. The point is that this body should not become an obstacle in your life. It should be a stepping stone. If the body becomes an obstacle, it will be a difficult one to surmount. You can still be spiritual, but it takes a lot more effort.

The body never lies – that is a good thing about it. The mind tells you all kinds of lies, all the time. People who do not trust the mind start off with the body. Hatha yoga can be an ultimate path, because body, mind, energies, and being are not separate entities. You can approach the same thing from different ends. The physical entry is a sure way, but a longer one. It is not even harder, except if you practice hatha yoga only every now and then. If you only do it once in a way, then bending may be a problem. If you do it every day, you will see sadhana is not hard at all.

If you have observed yourself, if you are angry, you will sit one way; if you are happy, you sit another way; if you are depressed, you sit yet another way. For every different level of consciousness or mental and emotional situation that you go through, your body naturally tends to take certain postures. The converse of this is the science of asanas. If you consciously get your body into different postures, you can also elevate your consciousness.

We have to work on clarity. What is it that gives us clarity of mind? A simple thing you can do to improve clarity is to handle everything you do with a certain precision. Hatha Yoga is all about precision – how your feet should be positioned, where your hands should be, how you should hold your head, how you move, how you place the things that you brought with you and so on.

An asana is a dynamic way of meditating. Because you can't sit still, you're doing something else to become meditative. That which is absolutely comfortable and stable is your asana. When your body is at ease, your mind is at ease and your energy is at full vibrance and balance. If you sit like this, you are naturally meditative. To come to a state of naturally being meditative, the preparatory step is asana. So in a way, asanas are a dynamic way of meditating.

When your breath becomes more and more stable, the disturbances of life are gone. You are able to clearly see what is happening. Either you achieve this through yogasanas or by becoming absolutely meditative.

In the words of the practices themselves

Builds physical strength, fitness and tenacity

ANGAMARDANA

Increases physical strength, stamina and energy levels

SURYA SHAKTI

Rejuvenates the body after periods of inactivity

UPA-YOGA

Regenerates the spine

YOGA NAMASKAR

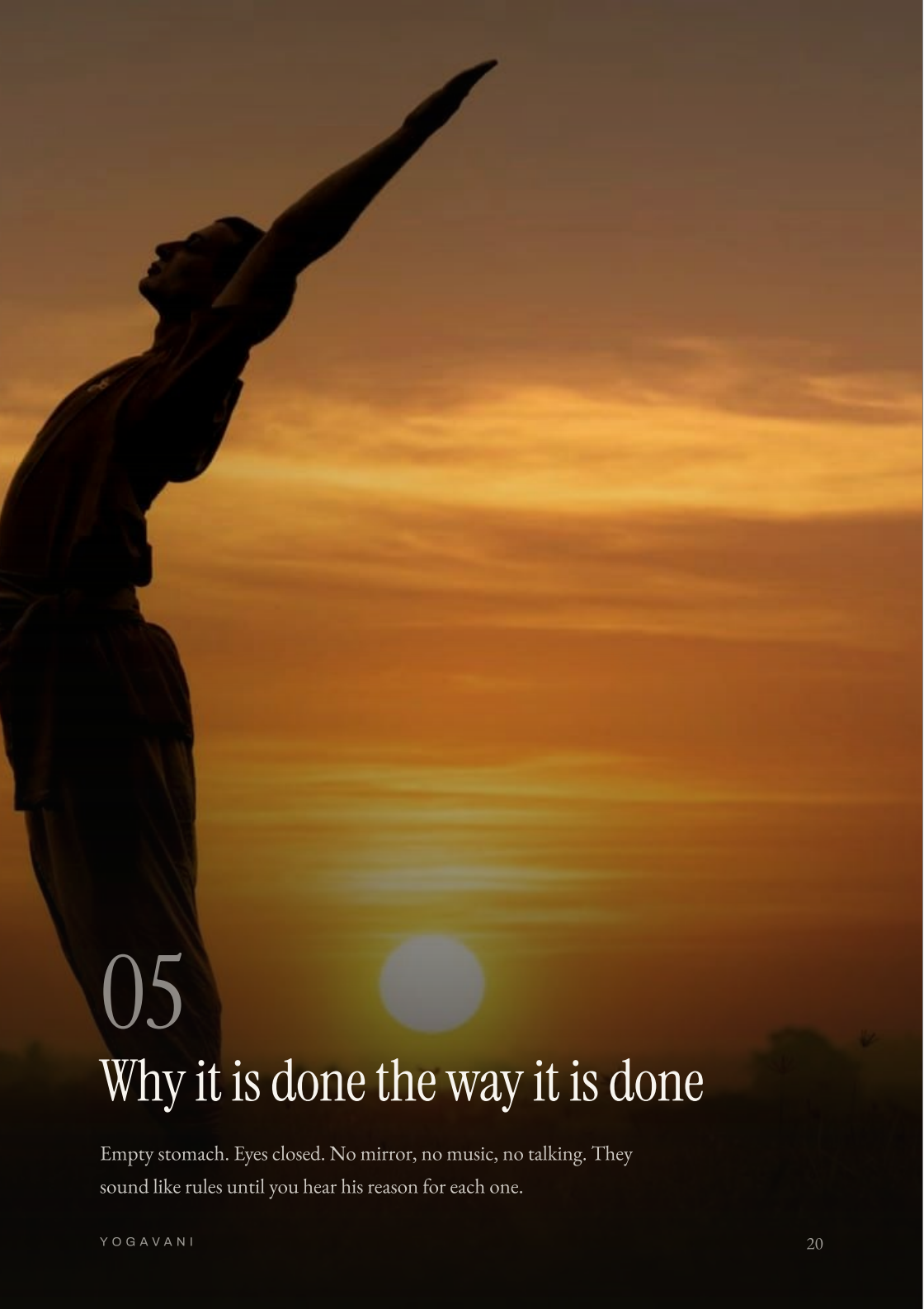
Boosts vigour and vitality

SURYA KRIYA

Deceleration of the ageing process

YOGASANAS

From the descriptions of the Classical Hatha Yoga practices, unchanged. Yoga practices support overall wellbeing and are not a substitute for medical care.



05

Why it is done the way it is done

Empty stomach. Eyes closed. No mirror, no music, no talking. They sound like rules until you hear his reason for each one.

01 On an empty stomach

While practicing yogasanas, you should not only be on an empty stomach, your bowels should be empty. Anything that is not the body should be out of the body if you want to move your energies upward.

02 With the eyes closed

The eyes will naturally close for any internalization because the visual apparatus engage us with the outward.

03 No mirror, no music

There should never be a mirror or music when you practice Hata Yoga. The culture of using mirrors has come from body-building and gymnasiums because they want to admire their bodies. In yoga, that should not be the attitude at all.

04 In silence

If you speak, so many things change dramatically, not just physiologically but in the energy parameters also. So, not talking during the asana is not just a norm, it is a rule. You must never, ever speak in postures because your focus, breath and what happens to your energy system are most important; otherwise you will disturb the system.

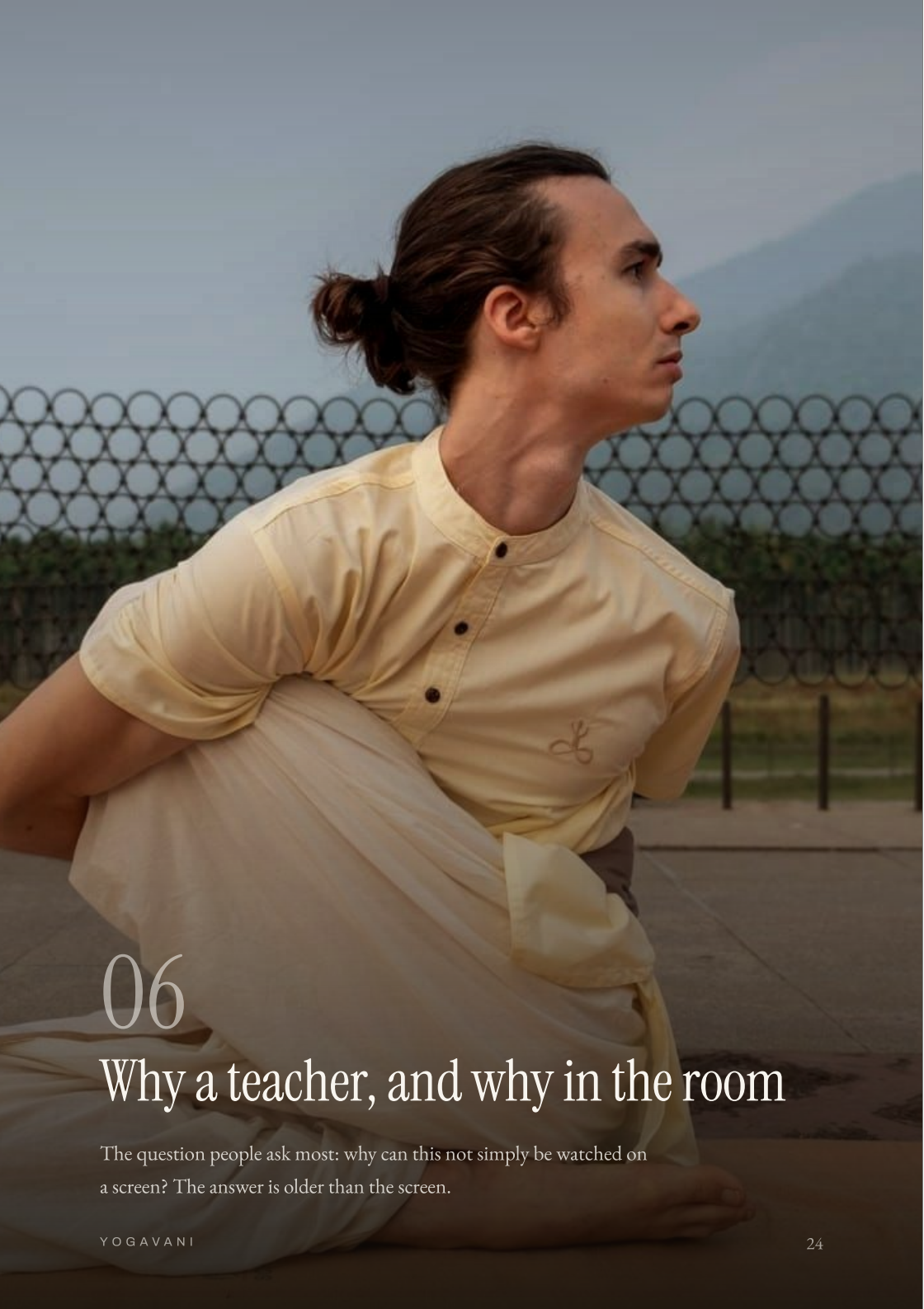
05 Cool water first

Before beginning your practice, it is always best to be immersed in or to allow a certain volume of water which is about five to eight degree centigrade lower than room temperature to flow over you. If this happens, the pores between the skin cells open up, and that's important for practicing yoga because we want the cellular structure of the body to be charged with a different dimension of energy.

06 All of you, or none of it

Classical yoga demands a certain involvement of your body, mind and energy, and the innermost core. That which is the source of creation, which we usually refer to as the divine, will not yield unless you are one hundred percent.

This body is just clay. It gets burnt with your karmic stuff and becomes rigid. Established memory is what we are referring to as karma. It is because of that bank of memory that the physiological and psychological substance becomes rigid. We are trying to undo that. The idea of asana is that you are working with the body and kneading it in such a way that after some time it is un-burnt.



06

Why a teacher, and why in the room

The question people ask most: why can this not simply be watched on a screen? The answer is older than the screen.

One person realizes something, and he looks for somebody who is truly dedicated, who holds this truth above his life. He looks for such a person and transmits it to him. This person looks for another like that and transmits it to him. This chain continued for thousands of years without a single break.

That which is not in your experience cannot be taught to you intellectually. It can only be taught to you by taking you to a different dimension of experience.

The reason we created the Adiyogi Alayam is to bring back classical yoga in its purest form. Not studio yoga or book yoga, not the kind of things that are being done in the world today, but proper classical yoga which is a phenomenally powerful science.

It is like if you grow a cow, you can milk it. After a while, people will only be interested in the udder and not the cow. So they won't have any cow. They'll just have a plastic udder and soon, there will be no milk.

Bringing back that dimension of yoga is not going to happen by instruction alone; phenomenal energy is needed, otherwise yoga cannot be taught. If you teach yoga without creating a vessel of energy, then that is not really yoga. That is just a farce.

We are taking a lot of care to see that distortions do not happen. We are demanding tremendous discipline and dedication from the teachers. We are putting very hard conditions on them so that distortions are not made.

They must understand the reason why we are taking so much care. For future generations on this planet, it is very important that this science is preserved in its pristine form not in some crazy ways of doing things.

This is not another yoga class.

No mirror

No music

No props

No adjusting hands

In silence

On an empty stomach

Yoga as exercise — stretching, flexibility, calories burned

Follow-along classes that change every session

Teacher interprets and modifies with the trends

Monthly subscriptions, ongoing dependency

Yoga as a technology — aligning the body, mind and energy system

A precise, unchanging sequence transmitted once — practised for life

Teacher transmits exactly as structured by Sadhguru — nothing added, nothing removed

One-time learning. The practice becomes yours for good

Learnt once. Yours for life.

A class asks you back every month. This asks once. Over a few mornings the practice is put into your body in full, in the form it has been carried in — and from then on it is yours.

You do it alone, in your own room, at your own hour, for as long as you live. Nothing is held back for a later course. Nothing runs out. Years later you may add another practice to it, and that one is yours too.

Which is also why it is taught in a room. A practice you will carry for forty years has to go into your body correctly the first time — and that needs a teacher watching your body, not a screen watching nothing. Every Yogavani teacher is certified by Sadhguru Gurukulam and teaches it exactly as it is structured, without adding a line of their own.



07

Where the two meet

Sadhguru speaks of classical Hatha Yoga as the way to keep the body active and aligned, and of food and the elements as life itself.

The sun is constantly making connection with you. This whole solar system is powered by the sun. Only because of that, life is possible on the planet. Our very body structure is based on this. Hatha Yoga is about sun and moon, which are important factors. It is a combination of these two impacts upon the planet that has produced the human body.

Annadanam is a possibility for you to bring a certain level of consciousness and awareness as to your relationship with food. Don't see it as food, it is life. This is something all of us must understand – every time there is food in front of you, it is not a commodity that you can use and throw. It is life. If you want your life to evolve, you must approach food, water, air and the earth we walk upon as life because these are the ingredients with which you are made. If you approach it as life, they will behave very differently within.

If you want to function at your full potential, be conscious and eat that kind of food where within 1.5-2.5 hours, your stomach bag becomes empty and the food material moves to the intestine. The body does not consume so much energy from that point. And within twelve to eighteen hours, the food must be completely out of the system. This is what Yoga always insists. If you maintain this simple awareness, you will experience much more energy, agility and alertness. These are the ingredients of a successful life irrespective of what you have chosen to do.

If you keep your body in such a way that there is very little damage during the day, you will see the downtime for servicing will naturally come down. This can be done by eating the right food and by keeping your mind in a joyful state. If you keep yourself joyful, if there is no friction in your body, no friction in your energy system because of the alignment that you have achieved, and no friction in your mind and emotion, your sleep quota will just drop.

If you feel there is rigidity or friction in the body, you can work it out by doing your hatha yoga in the morning. This body is a machine that gets better with use.

Five mornings, one step at a time

1 How you eat

Your selection of food and consumption of food also must happen consciously. More than what you eat, how you eat it is also equally important.

REFLECT How much of your last meal did you actually notice as you ate?

SMALL TOUCH The first minutes of a meal, in silence · At your next meal

2 Water, when you are thirsty

When you feel thirsty, you must drink water. Just to ensure you're drinking enough, drink ten percent more than what you actually need.

REFLECT Think of the last glass of water you drank. Was it because you were thirsty, or because you thought you should?

SMALL TOUCH Drink water as something precious · Every time you drink water today

3 Sun, air and open ground

Get some sunlight every day, please. Get some sun on your body every day, because sunlight is still pure, isn't it?

REFLECT What kind of fire has been burning in you this week: anger, resentment, love, compassion, or something else?

SMALL TOUCH Stand barefoot on the earth · Today · a few minutes

4 Setting it all down

If you sleep in that condition you will wake up with much more light, with much more energy, with much more possibilities than you have imagined possible.

REFLECT Looking back over the last twenty-four hours, what felt worthwhile?

SMALL TOUCH Be aware as you fall asleep · Tonight, in bed

5 Reverence for what makes you

The life-making material is being treated badly and we are expecting it'll behave well within us and it will not.

REFLECT Of food, water, sun, earth and sleep, which will you give more care to from now on?

SMALL TOUCH Sit with a lively tree · Today · a few minutes

Yoga Namaskar

Isha's free "Yoga Namaskar"

The best way to regenerate the spine — a simple, complete process for the whole body.

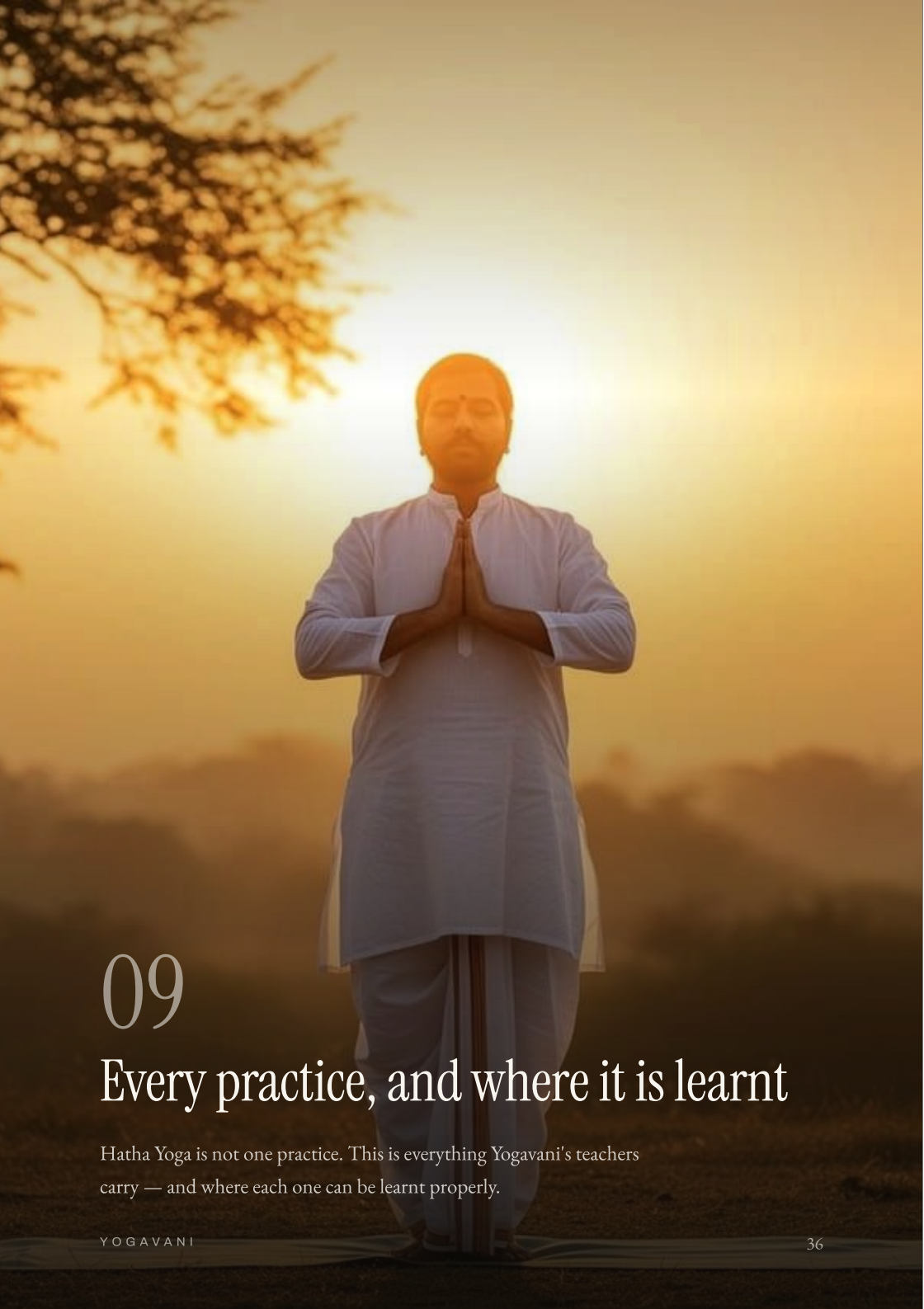
It is taught by Isha themselves, in Sadhguru's own guided video. That video is in the course, in a quiet room with nothing else on the screen — and it is the only place you should learn it from. A practice is not something to take off a page.



Practise with the video

Scan to open the five-day course on yogavani.in.





09

Every practice, and where it is learnt

Hatha Yoga is not one practice. This is everything Yogavani's teachers carry — and where each one can be learnt properly.

Free, and you can begin today

Sadhguru's free practices, taught by Isha online. The five-day course in your hands is built around one of them.

Nadi Shuddhi	A breath practice that cleanses the nadis — the pathways through which prana flows — for a balanced, peaceful system.
Isha Kriya	A simple, potent 12-minute-a-day process to bring clarity, stability and wellbeing.
Nada Yoga	Uses the power of sound to activate energy in different parts of the body, bringing a lasting sense of inner pleasantness.
Mantra Yoga	AUM chanting that aligns body, mind and energy, stabilising the system and easing psychological disturbance.
Simha Kriya	A powerful practice to boost immunity, strengthen the respiratory system and enhance lung capacity.

With a teacher, live online

Upa-yoga — the preparatory practices. These parts of it can be transmitted properly over a screen; the rest cannot.

Upa-yoga	A simple set of practices that activate the joints, muscles and energy system, bringing ease to the whole body.
Directional Movement of the Arms	A breath-synchronised arm movement that frees the shoulders, wrists and hands.
Neck Practice	A slow, gentle movement that releases the neck, steadies blood pressure and clears the head.
Shoulder Rotation	Eases tension across the neck, shoulders and chest and keeps the shoulder joint free.
Yoga Namaskar	The best way to regenerate the spine — a simple, complete process for the whole body.

With a teacher, in person

Classical Hatha Yoga, as structured by Sadhguru. Learnt once, in a room, from a Sadhguru Gurukulam certified teacher — and yours from then on.

Upa-yoga	A simple set of practices that activate the joints, muscles and energy system, bringing ease to the whole body.
· Directional Movement of the Arms	A breath-synchronised arm movement that frees the shoulders, wrists and hands.
· Neck Practice	A slow, gentle movement that releases the neck, steadies blood pressure and clears the head.
· Shoulder Rotation	Eases tension across the neck, shoulders and chest and keeps the shoulder joint free.
· Knee Rotation	A grounding practice that builds core strength in the lower limb and stabilises the spine.
· Squatting	A foundational movement that strengthens the pelvis and tones the abdominal and pelvic organs.
· Yoga Namaskar	The best way to regenerate the spine — a simple, complete process for the whole body.
Angamardana	A series of 31 dynamic processes — rooted in yoga, needing no equipment — to reach peak physical fitness.
Surya Kriya	A potent 21-step practice of great antiquity — a holistic process for health, vitality and inner wellbeing.
Surya Shakti	A vibrant practice for physical fitness, strength and stamina that realigns the whole body.

In person, continued

Yogasanas	21 powerful postures that align the inner system and enable it to hold higher dimensions of energy.
Bhuta Shuddhi	A process of purifying the five elements — earth, water, fire, air and space — within the human system.
Bhastrika Kriya	A powerful breath kriya that purifies the blood and increases lung capacity.
Shanmukhi Mudra	A subtle practice that brightens and rejuvenates the face and eyes and brings a state of balance.
Jala Neti	A cleansing practice that clears the nasal passages and sinuses of mucus and pollutants.
Pavanamuktasana	Loosens the spine and massages the abdominal organs, keeping the colon healthy.
Thoppukaranam	A simple movement that activates the brain and balances the right and left hemispheres.
Eye Practices	A natural way to strengthen the eyes and improve vision affected by screens.
Pregnancy Practice	Gentle practices that prepare the body for natural birth and support the child's development.

Eye practices are taught in person only, never online. Marked in red: the ones whose own descriptions speak to food, the body and energy.

Where to begin, for food, the body and energy

Angamardana

A series of 31 dynamic processes — rooted in yoga, needing no equipment — to reach peak physical fitness.

IN PERSON

Surya Shakti

A vibrant practice for physical fitness, strength and stamina that realigns the whole body.

IN PERSON

Upa-yoga

A simple set of practices that activate the joints, muscles and energy system, bringing ease to the whole body.

LIVE ONLINE



Find a program near you

Scan to see what is open now, in your city or live online.



10

And then there is more

Health and a quiet mind are what most people come for. Sadhguru is careful to say they are not what this is for.

Because what is human is not an established state. It is a possibility. It is not a fixed state. If this possibility has to be made use of, there is a whole system of understanding that needs to happen. Understanding the mechanics of how this life functions and what we can do with it. This mechanics, this technology, this science, we are referring to as yoga.

If you hold it in the right position, it can just grasp everything in the existence. It is just that we are doing all kinds of things with it because right now our whole perception of life is limited to the physical nature of the existence.

Now that you have reached such a point, if you have a working intelligence, I think you will use this capability to hasten this process – you don't want to go at the speed of evolution that is happening in nature. A spiritual process is only talking about accelerating life's desire.

You want to know the union of the existence; you want to know the oneness of what it is; not believing it. Like you experience the five fingers of your hand, if you can experience everything around you, then we say you are in yoga.

Your first 21 days

Fill a circle each day you practise Yoga Namaskar. The same hour each day helps.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

NOTES



The Veteran in a New Field

Winslow Homer, 1865 · The Metropolitan Museum of Art, public domain



Most human beings do not get anywhere because they somehow take one step forward, one step back. If you intentionally take a step forward and you acknowledge that, there will be a momentum for you to take the next step.

Where these words are from

Every passage is Sadhguru's own, published by Isha Foundation at isha.sadhguru.org and checked against it when this book was made.

- 6 Becoming Truly Energetic and Alive · A Plant-Based Diet and its Benefits · 10 Tips Help to Train Your Body To Sleep Less and Still Feel Restful
- 7 A Plant-Based Diet and its Benefits
- 9 The True Purpose of Yoga · The Science of Hatha Yoga · Top 7 Myths about Yoga – Busted · Why is Yoga Becoming So Popular?
- 10 The True Purpose of Yoga
- 11 Top 7 Myths about Yoga – Busted · How To Be A Good Yoga Teacher · The Science of Hatha Yoga
- 13 The True Purpose of Yoga · From Logic to Magic
- 14 Suicidal Thoughts, Depression and Yoga · Top 7 Myths about Yoga – Busted
- 16 The Science of Hatha Yoga · Hatha Yoga Guide: Science, Benefits and Insights · Clearing the Path
- 17 Project Human : Moving from Compulsiveness to Consciousness · The Science of Hatha Yoga
- 18 How Hatha Yoga Can Help Your Mind · Classical Yoga: The Right Conditions · How the Breath Evolves With Hatha Yoga Practice
- 21 Classical Yoga: The Right Conditions
- 22 Classical Yoga: The Right Conditions
- 23 Classical Yoga: The Right Conditions
- 25 Classical Yoga: The Guru-Shishya Parampara · Classical Yoga: The Right Ambience
- 26 Dhyanalina: Sowing the Seed of Spiritual Liberation · How To Be A Good Yoga Teacher
- 30 Hatha Yoga – Connecting to the Sun · Annadanam – Be a Mother to the World
- 31 Tips for Eating Healthy – How, When and What to Eat · 10 Tips Help to Train Your Body To Sleep Less and Still Feel Restful · Clearing the Path
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- 45 There's More to Life than This

Pictures: the photographs are Isha's own, except the one on page 5, made for this book; the plates are works in the public domain — p.44, The Veteran in a New Field, Winslow Homer, 1865 — The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Take one sincere step.



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Yoga practices support overall wellbeing and are not a substitute for medical care; if you have a health condition, please speak to your doctor first.