



CLASSICAL HATHA YOGA · AS STRUCTURED BY SADHGURU

Student Life

Classical Hatha Yoga for the years when everyone is asking what you will become



You as a life, you want to be at your fullest. You have
a right to be.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A few pages a day

This booklet goes with the free five-day course “Student life” on yogavani.in. It gathers what Sadhguru says about study, comparison and the years of being asked what you will become — 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.

A photograph of a desk at night. A white desk lamp is lit, casting a warm glow. Next to it is a glass of water. To the right are two books, one orange and one dark. In the foreground is an open notebook with handwritten text on the left page and a yellow and black pen on the right page. The background is dark.

01

What you came with

School and college teach comparison before they teach anything else. Sadhguru is blunt about where that comes from — and equally blunt that a young life has a right to be at its fullest.

You as a life, you want to be at your fullest. You have a right to be. Every life in creation, from a worm, insect, bird, animal, even a plantain tree, all striving to their best, isn't it? You also, but why are you concerned whether somebody is behind you?

So whenever something hurts you, there are two options. You can either become wounded or you can become wise, this is the choice. The more things hurt you early on in your life, the wiser you should have become, isn't it? But unfortunately, most people become wounded.

There is no best thing. Whatever we put our heart and soul into and do it, it's a great thing. It may be a simple thing in somebody else's eyes, but in our experience it's a great thing, and that's what we should do.

You can either become wounded or you can
become wise, this is the choice.

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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?

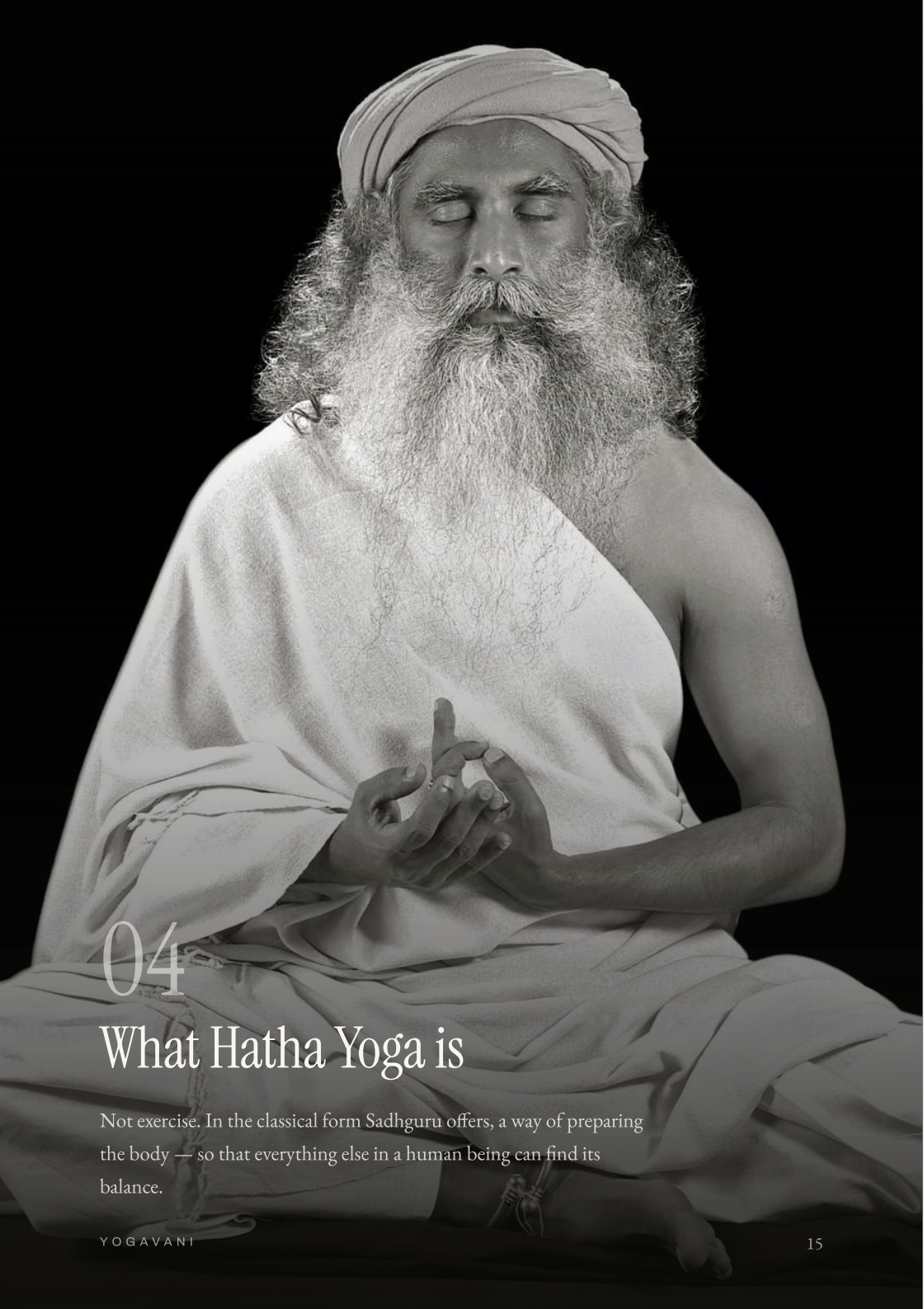
They made a survey and they have found out that 97% of the people are using only 7% of the capabilities that are there in an ordinary phone.

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

Relieves anxiety, stress and psychological tension

NADI SHUDDHI

Creates mental stability

ISHA KRIYA

Develops mental clarity and focus

SURYA KRIYA

Stabilisation of the body, mind and energy system

YOGASANAS

Relieves physical stress and tiredness

UPA-YOGA

Builds physical strength, fitness and tenacity

ANGAMARDANA

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

A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) sitting in a meditative pose (Padmasana) outdoors at sunset. They are all looking upwards with their eyes closed. The woman in the center is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt with a small logo. The man on the right is wearing a brown, short-sleeved shirt. The man on the left is partially visible, wearing a dark shirt. The background is a soft, hazy sky with a warm orange and yellow glow from the setting sun.

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.

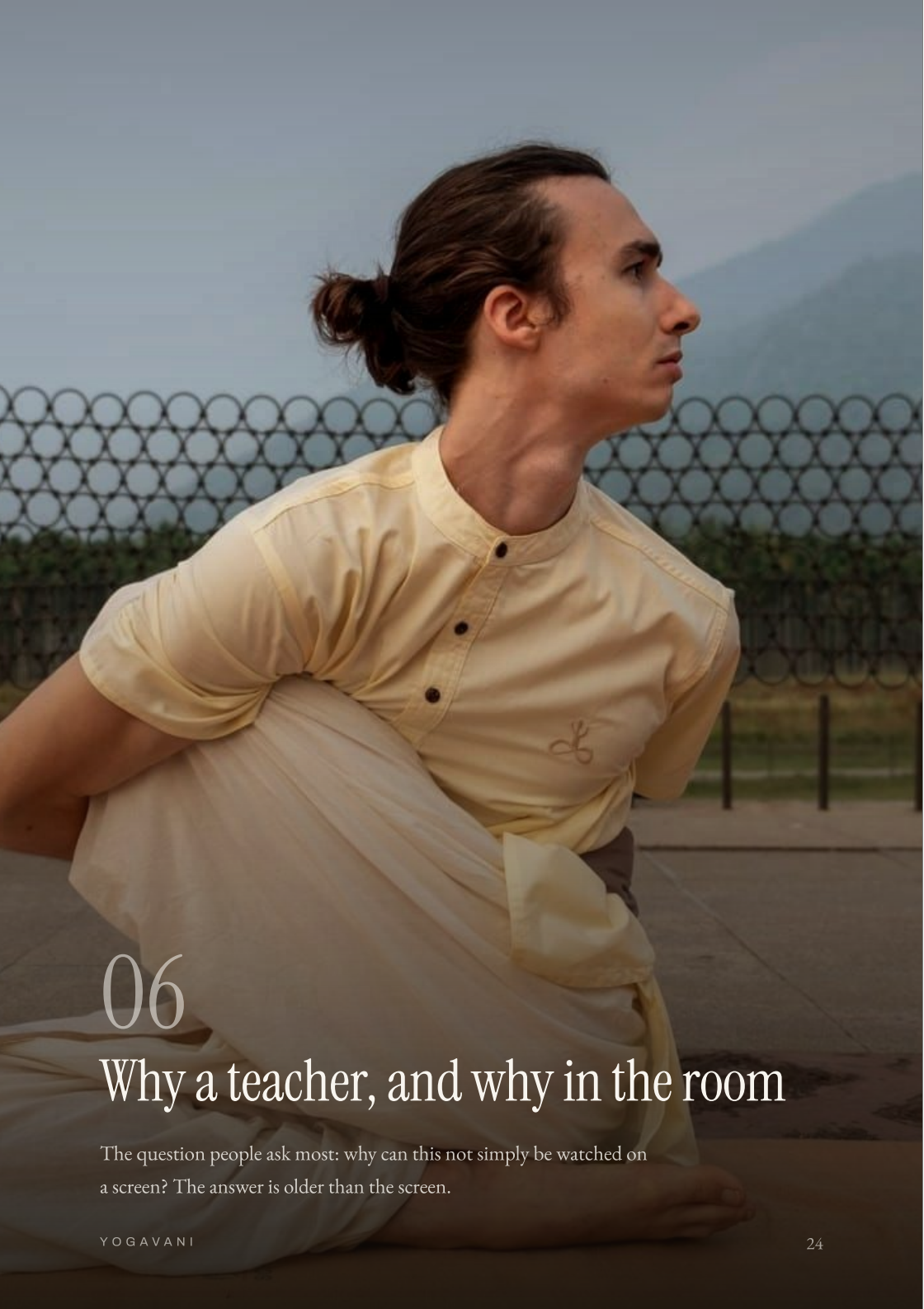
05 Cool water first

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

What a student is really training is not memory but the faculties themselves. In his words, that begins with balance, and balance is something the body can be brought to.

At this stage in your life, you must look for those things which will heighten your faculties, not lower your faculties, isn't it?

The most important thing for people who are seeking to be successful – whether in the corporate sector, in politics, in the military, or any other field – is balance. Only if you have a balance that is not disturbed by external situations, are you capable of making use of the competence and intelligence within you. Otherwise, even the most wonderful qualities that one may have will go waste, simply because of lack of balance. Hatha yoga brings this balance.

Hatha yoga is a kind of kneading – not just of the muscle but of every aspect of who you are. What you refer to as karma is embedded in every cell of the body and in every aspect of your energy.

Dead things can be preserved. Life cannot be preserved; it can only be nourished and used. If you're trying to preserve and save yourself, not going to work.

Five mornings, one step at a time

1 Wounded, or wise

So whenever something hurts you, there are two options. You can either become wounded or you can become wise, this is the choice. The more things hurt you early on in your life, the wiser you should have become, isn't it?

REFLECT Think of something that hurt you in the last year. Did it make you more careful, or more clear?

SMALL TOUCH Put it to the test instead of believing it · Today · whenever something in the course makes you doubt

2 Being ahead of somebody is not the same as being good

You as a life, you want to be at your fullest. You have a right to be. Every life in creation, from a worm, insect, bird, animal, even a plantain tree, all striving to their best, isn't it? You also, but why are you concerned whether somebody is behind you?

REFLECT Where are you measuring yourself against someone else this week, and what would you do differently if they did not exist?

SMALL TOUCH Five minutes with nobody to compare with · Today · 5 minutes, sitting alone

3 Never use the word high again

At this stage in your life, you must look for those things which will heighten your faculties, not lower your faculties, isn't it?

REFLECT What do you reach for when a day has gone badly — and does it leave you sharper afterwards, or duller?

SMALL TOUCH One meal without your phone · At your next meal · the first fifteen minutes

4 There is no best thing

There is no best thing. Whatever we put our heart and soul into and do it, it's a great thing. It may be a simple thing in somebody else's eyes, but in our experience it's a great thing, and that's what we should do.

REFLECT Name one thing you do that nobody is impressed by. What happens in you while you are doing it?

SMALL TOUCH Bring precision into one ordinary movement · Today · a minute, a few times

5 Life cannot be preserved

Dead things can be preserved. Life cannot be preserved; it can only be nourished and used. If you're trying to preserve and save yourself, not going to work.

REFLECT Where are you holding back — saving your energy for some later, more important thing?

SMALL TOUCH Sit with a tree for a few minutes · Today · a few minutes, outside

Nadi Shuddhi

Isha's free "Yoga for Peace"

A breath practice that cleanses the nadis — the pathways through which prana flows — for a balanced, peaceful system.

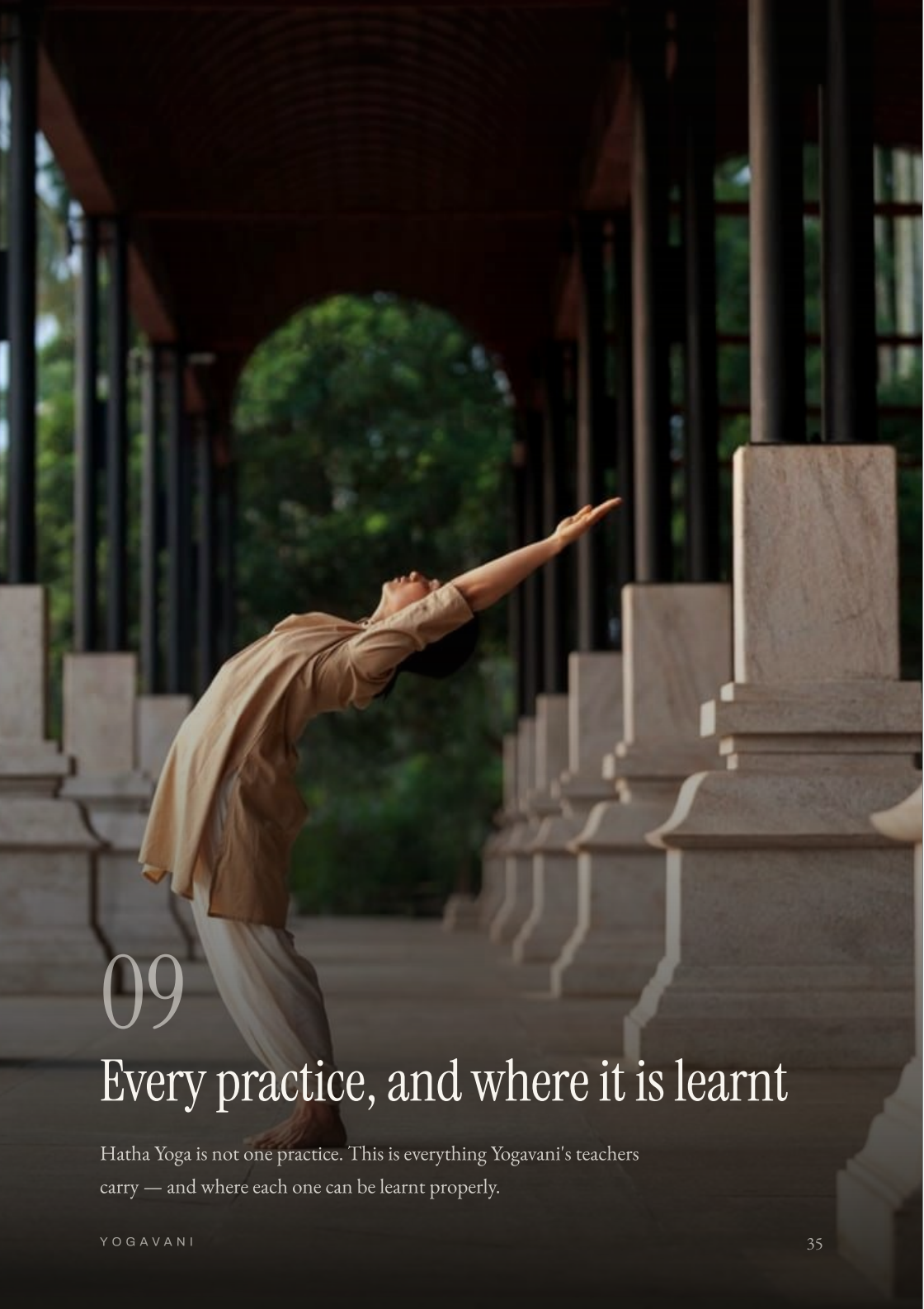
It is taught by Isha themselves, in Sadhguru's own guided video. That video is in the course, in a quiet room with nothing else on the screen — and it is the only place you should learn it from. A practice is not something to take off a page.



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 study, comparison and the years of being asked what you will become.

Where to begin, for study, comparison and the years of being asked what you will become

Surya Kriya

A potent 21-step practice of great antiquity — a holistic process for health, vitality and inner wellbeing.

IN PERSON

Yogasanas

21 powerful postures that align the inner system and enable it to hold higher dimensions of energy.

IN PERSON

Upa-yoga

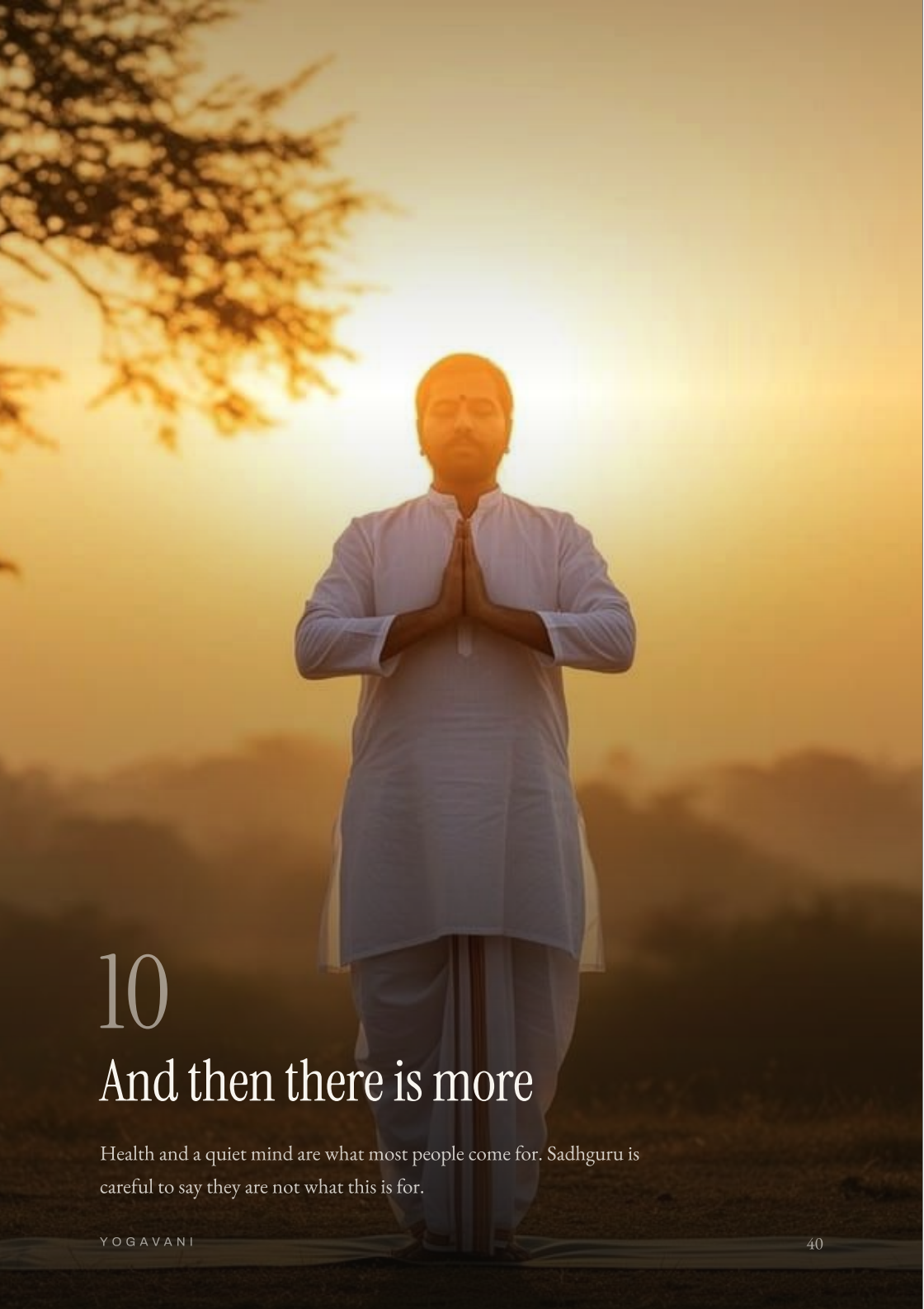
A simple set of practices that activate the joints, muscles and energy system, bringing ease to the whole body.

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 Nadi Shuddhi. 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



Landscape with Gentle Peaks

Kan Tenzu (Japanese, 1727–1795), 1767 · The Cleveland Museum of Art, public domain



This much must happen to you that your body, your mind, your emotion, your energies are not... are not an impediment in your life. They are instruments of empowerment in your life; this much you must do.

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 Is Too Much School & College Competition Taking A Toll? · 5 Tips For Youth To Overcome Hurdles In Life
- 7 5 Tips For Youth To Overcome Hurdles In Life
- 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 5 Tips For Youth To Overcome Hurdles In Life · Yogasanas – Creating Health, Joy and Blissfulness · Project Human : Moving from Compulsiveness to Consciousness · One Powerful Tip for Youth from Sadhguru
- 41 The True Purpose of Yoga · On the Fast Track: Do the Evolution!
- 44 One Powerful Tip for Youth from Sadhguru

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.43, Landscape with Gentle Peaks, Kan Tenju (Japanese, 1727–1795), 1767 — The Cleveland Museum of Art.



Take one sincere step.



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Sadhguru's words are quoted from his published articles and talks at isha.sadhguru.org. Photographs © Isha Foundation.

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.