

Salute to the Sun - Surya Namaskar

Whether you regularly practice yoga or not, you can enjoy the health benefits of Surya Namaskar - salute to the sun. Performed correctly, it is a completely safe set of yoga poses that will not cause strain or injury (ask your teacher for help beforehand if unsure).

You will experience health benefits by practicing just once daily, but you can also practice the series of poses as often as you like whenever you have time, make it realistic and perhaps start with one round and gradually build up to several once you feel comfortable to do so. One round is once on each side, so remember to swap legs.

When practiced in the morning, Surya Namaskar relieves stiffness, energizes the body and refreshes the mind. During the day, it is rejuvenating, and at night, Surya Namaskar can help you relax and get a good night's sleep.

There are numerous variations of the sequence from different yoga traditions and for differing abilities. The sequence below is a slightly modified version which should be suitable for most abilities including beginners. If you have any concerns about your ability or if you'd like a modified version that is easier or more challenging, ask your instructor for guidance.

Benefits

- Provides all of the key health benefits of yoga in a very succinct package
- Workout for the muscles
- Benefits the joints, ligaments & skeletal system
- Improves posture, flexibility & balance
- Stimulates & conditions bodily systems including digestive, nervous, lymphatic and respiratory systems.
- Benefits endocrine system including thyroid, parathyroid, pituitary, adrenal & reproductive glands
- Relaxing and rejuvenating for mind and body
- Aids concentration and focus
- Excellent for managing stress and alleviating depression

The Sequence

Start with the circled pose. In brackets is a suggested breathing sequence if you wish to follow it but as long as you are breathing mindfully that is the main thing.



1. **Tadasana/mountain pose.** Begin by standing comfortably in a grounded position with the knees unlocked.
2. **Prayer pose (Namaste)** - breathe mindfully for a few breaths until you feel ready to continue
3. Reach the **arms up** toward the ceiling (IN)
4. **Forward bend** from the hips, drop the head down toward the knees and hands towards or touching the floor. Keep knees bent if needed, no need to push here. (OUT)
5. **Low lunge** right foot back with back knee down and hands toward or on the floor. (IN)
6. **All fours** position briefly then lower hips toward floor elbows pointing backward (OUT)
7. **Low Cobra** - pushing through the hands to lift the head and chest (IN)
8. **Downward Facing Dog** – push through the hands, lift buttocks toward ceiling and allow heels to drop down towards the floor (OUT)
9. **Low lunge** (as #5) right foot forward with back knee down and hands toward or on the floor. (IN)
10. **Forward bend** (as #4) from the hips, drop the head down toward the knees and hands towards or touching the floor. (OUT)
11. **Roll** back up to standing Reach the **arms up** (as #3) toward the ceiling (IN)
12. **Tadasana/mountain pose** (as #1)

References

<http://hubpages.com/health/benefits-of-surya-namaskar>