

Yoga ^{for} the Heart

heart-centered yoga practices to
strengthen and open your heart





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EXPLORING YOUR HEART THROUGH YOGA

.....

BY KATHLEEN BRYANT

How do you regard the human heart—as a scientist or as a romantic? Yoga teaches us that these perspectives are not mutually exclusive. Yogic traditions view the heart as a key to good health, the source of love

and connection, and a wellspring of spiritual potential. “Open your heart center” is a common cue during yoga classes, and being informed about the energetics and physiology of the heart will help you to do just that.

There are many ways to explore and experience the heart through yoga. First, a quick review of the heart's physical anatomy: As the center of the body's circulatory system, the human heart's four chambers create a double pump about the size of a closed fist. The heart recirculates about 1,250 gallons of blood each day through 100,000 miles of blood vessels. The right atrium and ventricle circulate blood to and from the lungs; the left, to the rest of the body. The heart is cradled between the lungs, and during deep yogic breathing, its apex, level with the fifth or sixth rib, is massaged by the diaphragm.

Healing heart disease through biofeedback and yoga has been increasingly accepted in the West since the 1990s, when Dr. Dean Ornish and yoga teacher Nischala Joy Devi co-designed an effective program for patients recovering from heart attacks and other coronary issues. Recently, a study confirmed that yoga is as effective as aerobic exercise when it comes to improving heart health measurements like cholesterol

levels, blood pressure and body mass.

Yes, we can heal the heart—but the heart can also heal us. The “heart words” we use to describe our feelings (heartsick, soft-hearted, broken-hearted, etc.) have scientific basis. The heart secretes behavior-influencing hormones such as oxytocin, nicknamed “the love hormone,” for its positive effects on social bonding and its ability to counter cortisol, a stress hormone. Furthermore, the heart's electromagnetic field is several times larger than the brain's, and it can be sensed several feet away.

Ages before scientists evaluated the human heart through cardiograms or angiography, sages used deep yogic practices to tune into the body's energy centers or chakras. The rishis shared their knowledge in ancient texts and through oral tradition, associating the chakras with colors and symbols to help students visualize the energy body. The heart center, called Anahata (Unstruck Sound), is symbolized by a 12-petaled

lotus, and within it is a yantra of two overlapping triangles representing Shiva and Shakti, the divine masculine and feminine energies. The Sanskrit word for heart is hridayam, hrid meaning “center,” and ayam, “this.” At the middle of the seven chakras, Anahata is where individual concerns (survival, food, sex) become selfless—and open into connection and love.

Ramana Maharshi, one of India’s greatest yogis, described the heart as the nucleus of the universe, saying, “It is neither inside nor outside the body.” From asana to meditation, we can explore and expand the metaphysical heart in a myriad of ways. Heart-focused asanas include backbends, which stretch the front torso and create more room for the heart and lungs, which in turn creates an uplifting emotional effect. Hasta mudras such as Anjali Mudra and Hridaya Mudra can help energize the heart



center, as can practicing japa mala with the heart’s mantra, Yam. Bhakti Yoga—sometimes called the yoga of love—encompasses a range of practices highlighting compassion and devotion.

The rhythm of the heart accompanies our journey from inside the womb until life’s last moment. Its metric is both an inner guide and a source of love and compassion for all. How has yoga helped you grow to know your heart?



YOGA PRACTICES TO OPEN YOUR HEART

.....
BY HALI PLOURDE-ROGERS

How many times in yoga class have you been told to open your heart, lift your heart, or draw your heart forward? This is a very common cue indicating students should drop their shoulders away from their ears, lift their chest, and bend through the thoracic

spine. Including backbends in your practice encourages an even deeper physical opening of the chest and heart center. They also elongate the spine; release tension and stress from the neck, shoulders, and back; create space for the lungs and deeper breaths;

and energize your practice, body, and mind. In addition to backbends, focusing on love and gratitude while practicing will open your emotional heart. Opening the heart teaches us to be humble, vulnerable, and lead with our hearts in both practice and life.

Explore the following yoga practices to open your heart, cultivate gratitude and bring more love into your life:

Set up your practice space

Use colors, stones, and essential oils related to the heart chakra in your yoga practice space and on your body. The heart chakra is located in the physical heart and governs love, kindness and compassion. It's represented by the colors green and pink, the stones rose quartz and watermelon

tourmaline, and essential oils of rose and jasmine.

Body Scan

Begin your yoga or meditation practice with a body scan. Sit in a comfortable seated position and check in with your posture. Is your chest collapsed or lifted? If your chest is collapsed, you are physically protecting your heart. Lift the chest and open the shoulders to bring the heart to the front. Then rest one or both hands on the heart. Leave them there for a few deep breaths. Note how this feels.

Breathe into the heart

Focus your breath work on your heart. Imagine you are breathing from the heart and into the heart. Feel the chest rise and fall with your breath. Again take



note of any feelings that arise.

Mudras

A [mudra](#) is a gesture or seal that channels our life force.

Incorporate mudras into your practice to energize the heart. To practice Anjali mudra, bring the palms together at the heart and press the thumbs into the sternum. Use Anjali mudra at the beginning of practice while seated and in Mountain pose ([Tadasana](#)). As you grow comfortable with the mudra, use it with different poses throughout your practice.

Mantras

Use a [mantra](#) during your practice. The mantra for the heart chakra is “yam” pronounced similar to “young” or in English, “I love.” If using “I love,” think “I” as you inhale and “love” as you exhale.

Set your intention

Intention sets the stage for practice. It’s a moment where we consciously express why we are practicing. To open your heart, offer your practice to someone

you love or focus on feeling grateful.

Bring gratitude into your practice

Lasting, loving relationships are significantly influenced by expressions of gratitude.

According to a [study](#) published in 2014, gratitude is what holds two people together. The study reported that after expressions of gratitude, participants reported feeling more loving. Gratitude also increases feelings of [happiness and well-being](#).

Practice gratitude on the mat to get comfortable expressing thanks to your loved ones. Think of three things you are grateful for at the start or end of your yoga practice.

Asana

When practicing heart opening backbends, it is important to maintain balance by using counterposes. After any deep [back-bending yoga pose](#), neutralize the spine with a simple twist and then counter with a forward folding pose. Backbends energize and

physically open, expand, and lift the heart. Forward folds give your heart a chance to recharge and rest. Begin with gentle backbends such as Dog Tilt pose

([Svanasana](#)), Cobra pose ([Bhujangasana](#)), or Bridge pose ([Setu Bandhasana](#)). For a deeper backbend try Camel pose ([Ustrasana](#)) or Upward Bow pose ([Urdhva Dhanurasana](#)). These backbends bring the heart above the head. This is a physical representation of following or leading with your heart. For more specific asana recommendations, try this [heart-centered sequence](#).

Heart Meditation

Close your practice with a [heart-centered meditation](#). This can be as simple as breathing into the heart and using the mantra “I love” as mentioned earlier. You may also incorporate a mudra here, such as Anjali mudra.

Take any or all of these recommendations and mix them into your daily practice. As you move from your mat and through your day, come back to your intention of love and gratitude.





YOGA HELPFUL FOR HEART HEALTH, LOWERING BP

BY ROSE KEYES

The United States leads the world in heart related ailments, including [heart disease](#) and [high blood pressure](#). For people suffering from these and related illnesses, such as diabetes, treatment may feel like an uphill

battle with no end in sight. But there is hope. In a number of medical trials yoga, meditation, and pranayama have proven effective in treating and in some cases even reversing many heart conditions. An [exciting new study](#)

published in the 2016 European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing reinforces the benefits of yoga for heart health.

The study focuses on atrial fibrillation, a disturbance of the heart rhythm characterized by irregular, fast, or slow heartbeats. People suffering from atrial fibrillation report symptoms of dizziness, shortness of breath, and chest pain. Other symptoms include heightened stress and anxiety and a low quality of life. This condition is caused by an irregularity of blood circulation between the upper and lower atria of the heart. There are three types of atrial fibrillation: paroxysmal, persistent, and permanent. Once a patient reaches the permanent stage there is no way to reverse the problem. Currently, [conventional treatment](#) includes medications to regulate heart rhythm and prevent blood clots, and [medical procedures](#) such as catheter ablation and cardioversion. Reported side effects from both medication and physical treatments include nausea, dizziness, infection, and

blood clots. While these treatments do provide relief, it is often only temporary, with symptoms recurring over time.

Eighty patients, all suffering from paroxysmal atrial fibrillation, were invited to participate in the study. The group was divided in half, one to receive [yoga therapy](#) in addition to standard treatment, and the other to act as the control, receiving no yoga based therapies. Both groups were given tests to evaluate and establish a baseline for quality of life, as well as blood pressure and heart rate. After 12 weeks both groups were tested once more and the findings revealed overwhelmingly that the group receiving yoga based therapies had lower heart rates as well as decreased levels of systolic and diastolic blood pressure and greater quality of life.

This study reinforces the findings discussed in another article published in the Spring 2015 issue of the Journal of Arrhythmia. The patient base was similar: all people suffering from paroxysmal atrial fibrillation,

although this study was unique in that the patients acted as their own controls. For three months they all engaged in standard medical approaches to treat the illness, followed by three months of yoga classes. At the end of the study all patients

experienced greater quality of life as well as heightened physical, mental, and emotional health and a reduction in all the symptoms associated with atrial fibrillation.

Both of the studies utilized a mixture of Hatha and relaxation focused yoga therapies in their classes. There are a number of yoga poses that are beneficial to the heart that can be incorporated into a daily practice. These include gentle neck rolls, side stretches, and shoulder shrugs to release tension and open the sides, front, and back of the body to promote greater blood circulation and lung capacity.



Supported Setu Bandha ([Bridge](#)) is a gentle inversion that helps to re-circulate the blood and reclined supported [Supta Baddha Konasana](#) is an excellent heart, chest, and hip opener. Other poses and specific heart focused practice sequences

can be found [here](#) and [here](#).


Although [atrial fibrillation](#), [heart disease](#), and [high blood pressure](#) continue to increase at alarming rates, there is a great deal of hope to be found in the results of these studies and many others like them. For thousands of years, yoga has consistently proven to be a powerful healing resource, bringing the practitioner increased physical health and vitality, as well as a greater sense of overall balance and well-being. So whether you are suffering from one of the heart ailments discussed here, or something else entirely, try some yoga!



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A woman with blonde hair in a bun is meditating in a lotus position. She is wearing a white halter-neck crop top and blue and white patterned leggings. She has a long, dark blue mala necklace with a red tassel. Her hands are in a mudra, resting on her knees. She is sitting on a large, colorful mandala rug with purple, blue, green, and yellow patterns. The background is a light blue gradient.

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YOGA: GOOD FOR YOUR HEART

.....

BY KELLY GOLDEN

Practitioners of Hatha yoga have long praised the ability of the practice to calm the mind and heal the body. The great teacher BKS Iyengar came to his teacher TKV Krishnamacharya to heal his ill health. Now, scientists at Emory University in Atlanta, GA have supported this observation with new evidence that the physical practice of yoga asana can

greatly [benefit heart failure patients](#).

Heart failure is defined as a chronic disorder that limits the efficiency of the heart preventing it from pumping a sufficient amount of blood through the body. Though the study is preliminary, the initial findings are very positive. Medically, the study

concluded that an eight-week course of yoga can help reduce the inflammation that is linked to death in heart failure patients, and when done wisely, is completely safe. There was also significant difference in the main biological markers between yoga participants and traditionally treated patients. Participants in the study experienced a 26 percent decrease in symptoms based on a quality of life assessment, compared to only a three percent drop of those who were treated on traditional medical therapy. In addition, the doctors conducting the study referenced the immense benefits of the body-mind connection in healing and quality of life.

Heart failure patients often experience difficulty in exercising due to fatigue and shortness of breath, and the study found that as an exercise, hatha yoga was completely accessible to these patients. It touted the benefits of the mild aerobic exercise of hatha yoga due to the strong emphasis on the breath linked with more gentle movements of the body. As exercise is of utmost importance

in maintaining health and lowering depression in chronically ill patients, an accessible program is of great significance.

Drawing awareness to the importance of the mind-body connection is a gigantic step in bridging the gap between treating the symptoms and healing the whole person, which has been an ongoing criticism of traditional western medicine. Almost anyone who has ever practiced hatha yoga can attest to the mental and emotional enhancements that occur as a result of practice. Even those who come to the mat for purely physical reasons usually feel a sense of mental ease and steadiness following even the most demanding practice. So, at last the medical community is beginning to recognize the truths that so many practitioners have known all along, and it's always nice to have scientific proof for what we already know!

Many of us are aware that our emotional health has a direct effect on our physical well being. I myself, during an extremely

stressful period in my life, developed a stomach ulcer as an effect of stress. So it is no surprise that even if the cause of the disease in the body isn't directly

related to our emotional health, the state of our mind can have a great impact on the severity or healing of our physical issues. In the recent past, a visit to the doctor would result in a stack of prescriptions to deal with your individual physical symptoms, but the root cause of the suffering might be overlooked. The process has been to treat the symptoms and you will feel better. But treating the symptoms doesn't often treat the cause of illness, which can frequently be traced back to this mind-body connection. As humans, we are not sets of independently

functioning systems that have no connection with each other, instead we are a complex connection of interwoven, interrelated organs, systems, and structures that enable us to survive and be healthy. When one of these systems is deficient or stressed, the other



systems suffer. One of the insights from this study is the importance of maintaining whole health when fighting dis-ease in the body. [Another study out of Yale](#) suggests that this whole health approach can also help prevent the occurrence of heart dis-ease and its markers.

As a practitioner and teacher of hatha yoga, the biggest challenge I see with these findings is encouraging those who have never practiced yoga to come to the mat. Especially for those who have a view of yoga as contortion, “only for flexible people,” or have trepidation about bringing awareness to themselves. We now have the research to back our constant claims that yoga can benefit your health, but we still have the hurdle of fear of the unknown to overcome. So how do we begin to bring people to the mat? Well, studies like this one provide a strong support, as do gearing classes toward a specific population. My father suffers from heart disease and would not even consider yoga as an option due to the fact that he thinks

everyone in the class must be young, strong, and flexible. In his defense, most of my students do fall in to one or more of the previous categories. As a teacher, it is fun and challenging to have a class full of physically fit practitioners eager to learn. But, is there not a greater reward in gearing our classes to the specific needs of a group of students in a way that would greatly improve their quality of life?

This is not to say that wherever you are reading this you are not already teaching or taking one of these types of classes. The majority of classes out there, though, are being modeled after the aerobics craze of the 70’s and 80’s; big classes of skinny, sweaty people. So now, science is showing us evidence of deeper and more profound health benefits as well as earnest mental and emotional connections. In the classic tradition of hatha yoga, teachers taught in a way that addressed each student’s needs specifically and effectively. So now, as western medicine begins to bridge the gap between mind and body, those of

use who experience and teach the benefits of hatha yoga should begin to take these findings into the classes at the studios and gyms where we teach. We may find that once we do, the work of hatha yoga will open up a whole new experience to both the students and the teachers, and to both body and mind. One of yoga's biggest effects is that it begins to unfold awareness of our bodies and our unhealthy patterns. Many yoga practitioners attest to the experience of whole life changes as a result of beginning a hatha yoga practice. Possibly for yoga practitioners who come to the mat with an experience of disease, the awareness can be the most effective healing tool that yoga can provide.

Ultimately, when we can begin to see the ability of hatha yoga to affect the whole person, then maybe we can begin to address our sharing of hatha yoga on a more individual basis.





HEART CHAKRA 101

.....
BY TIMOTHY BURGIN

Anahata Chakra, meaning “not struck,” is located at the heart (center of the chest). It is symbolized by the color green and a lotus with 12 petals. Its issues are love, acceptance, and trust. Anahata is the center of compassion, and a positive balance in the heart chakra would be showing sensitivity and

unconditional love for self and others.

Traditional symbology: In the center of Anahata's twelve-petalled lotus are two interlacing triangles, which form a hexagon; this is the yantra of the air element. At the center of the diagram, there is a candle flame,

which symbolizes the consciousness and the individual soul. Traditionally there is often an image of a four-armed deity riding a black antelope, representing the symbol of alertness. At the bottom is written the mantra Yam.

Physiological association:

Anahata chakra is associated with the heart and lungs, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. It is also related to the thymus that is located in the chest. The thymus plays an important role in the



immune system, and areas where we help to fend off stress.

Psychological qualities: Love, compassion, empathy, a deep sense of peace and centeredness.

Balanced expression of Anahata chakra:

Love is the basis of all actions. Feeling compassion, being tolerant and demonstrating kindness to oneself and others. An overarching feeling of joy and happiness, at ease with oneself, content in our surroundings and with the people in our lives.

Example of when Anahata chakra is out of balance:

When the Anahata chakra is over-active a person is overly ruled by emotions; sadness, hurt, unexpressed grief can sit in this area, jealousy, possessiveness or being too self-critical. When Anahata is under-active, a person may be demonstrating shyness, withdrawn, feeling unloved or unappreciated, and generally finding it hard to let people in.

Affirmation:

May I be free to feel my true feelings, desires, and passions and be at home in my heart.

Yoga Poses to Activate this Chakra:

Fish

Standing yoga mudra

Pigeon

Camel

Half Camel

Standing backbend

Prayer twist

Yoga Practices to Activate this Chakra:

Mudra: Hridaya and Anjali

Mantra: Yam

Meditation: [Heart Chakra Meditation](#)

Yoga Path: [Bhakti](#)



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head and into
your heart... think
less, feel more.*





THE ART OF PRACTICING SELF-COMPASSION

.....
BY KATHLEEN BRYANT

According to the Yoga Sutras (1.33), one way to purify the mind and increase serenity is to practice [compassion \(karuna\)](#) in the face of suffering. Compassion means “shared feeling,” a level of sympathy so deep that it inspires

action to alleviate another’s pain or sorrow. Forgiveness, according to some, is the ultimate expression of compassion. But the true test of compassion may be whether or not you can extend it to yourself.

Practicing yoga presents us with many opportunities for exploring self-compassion. The very first of the [yamas or ethical guidelines](#) that Patanjali gives in the [Yoga Sutras \(2.30\)](#) is [ahimsa or non-harming](#), encompassing words, thoughts, and actions. Most of us learned this golden rule while still on the playground, and yet even in a yoga class, we create struggle and inner conflict, striving for our idea of the perfect pose or competing with other students and ourselves, trying to top our “personal best,” as though asana was a contest or performance. Even if failure doesn’t result in physical harm [we can injure ourselves](#) with feelings of envy or lack or self-dissatisfaction.

News flash: Being unforgiving toward yourself is not a sign of admirable self-discipline but of ego. In the yogic sense, [ego consciousness \(ahamkara\)](#) is not so much about pride or self-puffery as it is about separation. The ego mind identifies with personality, not presence. [True humility](#) is recognizing that each of us is a drop in the ocean of

humanity, sharing the same fears and yearnings as well as the same potential for greatness. When you practice self-compassion, you accept the ego’s failings and move on, guided by the light of presence within.

In the third chapter of the yoga sutras, Patanjali discusses [samyama or integration](#), which combines concentration, meditation, and Samadhi—the sixth, seventh, and eighth limbs of yoga. Samyama is often understood to be the [source of yoga’s “superpowers,”](#) but it can also be simply defined as recognizing the macrocosm within the microcosm: As above so below. How you do asana reflects how you do life. And how you treat yourself ripples outward. As [Marianne Williamson](#) has said, “Your playing small does not serve the world.”

Self-compassion is not merely a state of being or quality; it’s a practice, and we learn it through experience. During asana, pranayama, meditation, and other yoga practices, [we learn to observe](#)



and befriend the body and mind—developing self-awareness and discernment. Over time, we discover when we need to be firm, and when we need to surrender. We begin to realize how our experiences in the microcosm—shoulder tightness in *Parsvottanasana*, for example—relate to the macrocosm. Does forcing the shoulders back truly open the heart? Or is it more

effective to soften the restrictions with a spirit of self-compassion?

One of the simplest ways to develop self-compassion is through breath awareness. The ego often lies to protect itself, but the breath honestly mirrors the mind and emotions. Practical and accessible, this lesson is one we can take from the yoga studio into the world beyond.



HEART CHAKRA MEDITATION

.....
BY TIMOTHY BURGIN

This heart chakra meditation is a simple technique to release sadness and fear and to bring compassion and love into your life.

Sit in a comfortable position, either cross-legged on the floor or in a chair. Sit up tall with the spine straight, the shoulders relaxed and the chest open. Inhale

the palms together and lightly press the knuckles of the thumbs into the sternum at the level of your heart (you should feel a little notch where the knuckles magically fit). Breathe slowly, smoothly and deeply into the belly and into the chest. Soften your gaze or lightly close the eyes. Let go of any thoughts or distractions

and let the mind focus on feeling the breath move in and out of your body. Once the mind feels quiet and still, bring your focus to the light pressure of the thumbs pressing against your chest and feeling the beating of the heart. Keep this focus for one to five minutes.

Next, gently release the hands and rub the palms together, making them very warm and energized. Place the right palm in the center of your chest and the left hand on top of the right. Close the eyes and feel the center of your chest warm and radiant, full of energy. See this energy as an emerald green light, radiating out from the center of your heart into the rest of your body. Feel this energy flowing out into the arms and hands, and flowing back into the heart. Stay with this visualization for one to five minutes.

After you feel completely soaked with heart chakra energy, gently release the palms and turn them outwards with the elbows bent,

the shoulders relaxed and the chest open. Feel or visualize the green light love energy flowing out of your palms and into the world. You can direct it towards specific loved ones in your life or to all sentient beings.



To end your meditation, inhale the arms up towards the sky, connecting with the heavens, then exhale and lower the palms lightly to the floor, connecting with the earth. Take a moment or two before moving on with the rest of your day.

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TOP YOGA POSES & MANTRAS FOR A GRATEFUL HEART

.....

BY TIMOTHY BURGIN

Expressing gratitude, gratefulness, and thankfulness feels really good, and research shows it is good for us. The practice of gratitude “allows for positive attribution, which has been shown to protect against stress and depression” and gratitude can also increase one’s overall life satisfaction. It is

awesome that we have a national holiday dedicated to giving thanks, but research in positive psychology has shown that to increase your levels of happiness a daily practice of gratitude is essential. Fortunately, the many paths of yoga give us several

techniques to bring an attitude of gratitude on to our yoga mats.

The simplest approach to incorporating more gratitude into your yoga practice is to use a [sankalpa or intention](#). Creating an intention of feeling and expressing gratitude at all times, and across all situations, can be a powerful guiding force in your yoga practice. If you need something more concrete and accessible, you

already use these poses, try holding them for a few more breaths than you normally do. You can also supercharge these asanas by remembering and focusing on your gratitude sankalpa while practicing them.

Two mantras to cultivate gratitude

One of the most powerful ways to activate gratitude, gratefulness,



THE TIBETAN MANTRA OM MANI PADME HUM

can also start or end your practice by reflecting on three recent life experiences that you are thankful for. Another easy way to add some gratefulness to your hatha yoga practice is to incorporate more upper body opening poses—especially asanas that activate the [heart](#) and [throat chakras](#). If you

and thankfulness is through [chanting a mantra](#). There are two mantras you can use with [mantra meditation](#) or you can chant a few rounds of either of these mantras as an invocation for your asana practice. The Tibetan mantra Om Mani Padme Hum is difficult to translate, but chanting it will

cultivate compassion, kindness, and gratefulness. The Sanskrit mantra Om Lokah Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu is usually translated as “may all beings everywhere be happy and free” and encourages feelings of gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.

Traditionally mantras are chanted with one’s full attention and focus and repeated in sets of 108. [Mala beads](#) are often used to count the mantras, and you can boost the

power of the practice if the mala you are using is made with a gratitude gemstone. Stones that are said to promote gratitude are green garnet, green jasper, green aventurine, blue tiger eye, and green apatite.

Ending your yoga practice by bringing the hands into Anjali Mudra (prayer pose) in front of your heart and gently bowing your head is a wonderful way to close your practice with a sense of gratefulness and thankfulness.

The 8 best yoga poses to cultivate gratitude



COBRA POSE



CAMEL POSE



EXTENDED
DOG POSE



WARRIOR
SEAL



PRAYER SQUAT



UPWARD
BOAT



FISH POSE



SUPINE
BOUND
ANGLE



THE BEST YOGA POSES FOR YOUR HEART

.....
BY TIMOTHY BURGIN

Because of their effects on both the physical and energetic bodies, specific types of yoga postures can be used to control and prevent heart disease.

Upper back-bending poses open the chest to improve heart

function and respiration. Side-bending poses open the energy channels of the liver, gallbladder and heart to help remove physical and energetic blockages in the heart and chest. Spine lengthening poses promote good posture to reduce compression on

the heart and lungs and to facilitate proper functioning of the heart. [Shavasana](#) (corpse or relaxation pose) is deeply calming and has been shown to reduce high blood pressure in just a few weeks, and other calming restorative poses will also help reduce stress and blood pressure.

Inversions help to rest the heart muscle and improve blood circulation, but are contraindicated with unmedicated high blood pressure.

Click on an image or posture name for detailed instructions, contraindications and modifications.

		
Fish Matsyasana	Bridge Setu Bandhasana	Cobra Bhujangasana
		
Half Camel Ardha Ustrasana	Crab Pose Catuspadapitham	Half Bow Ardha Dhanurasana
		
Sphinx Salamba Bhujangasana	One Handed Tiger Eka Hasta Vyaghrasana	Half Locust Ardha Shalabhasana



**Revolved Head to
Knee
Parivrtta Janu
Sirsasana**



**Gate
Parighasana**



**Extended Side Angle
Utthita
Parsvakonasana**



**Staff Posture
Dandasana**



**Joyful Baby
Ananda Balasana**



**Extended Dog Pose
Utthita Svanasana**



**Child
Balasana**



**Crocodile
Makarasana**



**Supine Bound Angle
Supta Baddha
Konasana**



**Wide-Legged
Forward Bend
Prasarita
Padottanasana**



**Downward Facing
Dog
Adho Mukha
Shvanasana**



**Half Shoulder Stand
Ardha Sarvangasana**

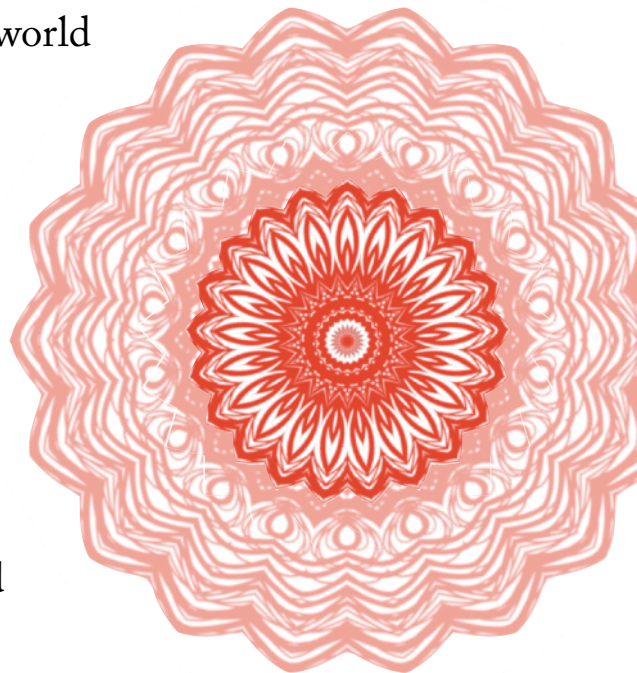
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Mission Statement

Our deepest desire and wish is to make the world a better place. Our highest goal is to remove the suffering, misery and unhappiness of the people of the world, and to remove the causes of this suffering. We are here to serve, in our highest capacity, to spread the knowledge and wisdom of the ancient path of yoga to all who desire these tools. We pray that our work helps others to learn, grow and develop spiritually, physically and mentally. May peace, love and joy reside in the hearts of all.



Good Business Karma

Yogabasics.com is operated using the yogic principles of the yamas and niyamas. We embrace the yogic teaching of Ahisma (nonviolence) in our relationship to the earth. At YogaBasics.com we have a strong commitment to protecting the planet by becoming a carbon neutral and green company. Through Samtosha and Asteya we practice generosity through contributing over 5% of our profits to non-profit organizations.

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