



INTRODUCTION TO YOGA FOR WOMEN

Week 6: Sun Salutations - Surya Namaskar

Overview

The **Sun Salutation**, or **Surya Namaskar**, means “salute to the sun” to show our gratitude. In traditional Indian culture, the sun (Surya) has long been revered as a source of light, warmth, and life — symbolising consciousness and the inner light within each of us all all living things.

People were and are still using various rituals to express their gratitude to the sun, and with the emergence of yoga, eventually the sequence of yoga poses was developed to salute to the sun, at sunrise, and help awaken the body and focus the mind, ready for the day ahead.

There are two classic versions of sun salutations, commonly known as **Sun Salutation A and B**. However, over the years many emerging yoga schools developed their own versions that are more in line with their modern styles of teaching yoga. Similarly, yoga teachers develop their own versions of sun salutation to make it more accessible to their students.

In the sequence, you move with your breath, either inhaling or exhaling as you enter the different poses (asanas). Traditionally, sun salutations are practiced 108 times because in yogic philosophy, **108** is considered a sacred number that represents **wholeness, unity, and the universe itself**.

Sun salutations are usually practiced at the beginning of a yoga class to help warm up the body and focus the mind in readiness for the rest of the practice, some teachers use it at different stages of the class, when they want to energise the students. Some yogis use it as a stand alone practice, as it exercises the whole body.

Benefits

This rhythmic movement links breath with motion, building strength, flexibility, and vitality while cultivating gratitude and presence.

Practised mindfully, sun salutations become a moving meditation that balances body, breath, and spirit.

The different poses are designed to involve the whole body, hence it's a great all round workout.

As you move with your breath, the practice can help you connect with your breath and develop it into a more deeper, slower and mindful practice.

Surya Namaskar A

1. Mountain
2. Inhale - Lift arms up above you
3. Exhale - Palms touch, forward fold
4. Inhale - Hands against shins, half lift flat spine
5. Exhale - Step back (right leg, then left) into a plank / all fours / downward dog
6. Keep exhaling - Lower your knees, chest, chin
(Alternatively you can inhale as stay on / lower your knees and exhale lower chest and chin)
7. Inhale - Cobra
8. Exhale - Downward dog or table top
9. Inhale - Step right leg forward
10. Exhale - Step left leg forward
11. Inhale - Hands against shins, half lift
12. Exhale - Forward fold
13. Inhale - Rise up taking arms with you
14. Exhale - Mountain

Repeat leading with the left leg at no 5 and 9 to complete one round.

Surya Namaskar B

1. Mountain
2. Inhale - Chair
3. Exhale - Forward fold
4. Inhale - Hands against shins, half lift flat spine
5. Exhale - Step back (right leg, then left) into a plank / all fours / downward dog
6. Keep exhaling - Lower your knees, chest, chin
(Alternatively you can inhale as stay on / lower your knees and exhale lower chest and chin)
7. Inhale - Cobra
8. Exhale - Downward dog or table top
9. Inhale - Step right leg forward, bend it
10. Exhale - Step left leg in and place it flat on the floor
11. Inhale - Rise into Warrior I
12. Exhale - Lower down stepping into a downward dog or table top
13. Inhale - Step right leg forward
14. Exhale - Step left leg forward
15. Inhale - Hands against shins, half lift
16. Exhale - Forward fold
17. Inhale - Rise up taking arms with you
18. Exhale - Mountain

Repeat leading with the left leg at no 5 and 13 to complete one round.