

## Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations)

Description: Surya Namaskar is one of the best routines that Yoga offers.

**Sthiti:** Tadasana with Namaskara mudra

Opening and Closing prayers: Refer to Surya Namaskar Mantra

Practice: Following is a ten Step Routine of Surya Namaskar:

[Square brackets indicate the breathing to be done while you go to the corresponding pose]

1. Ardha Chakrasana [breathe in]
2. Pada Hastasana [breathe out]
3. Ashva Sanchalanasana (back knee straight and should not touch ground) [breathe in]
4. Chaturanga Dandasana (body inclined, look 3ft in front of you) [breathe out]
5. Ashtanga Namaskar - 8 body parts (forehead/chin, chest, palms, knees, toes) touching the ground, elbows vertically up and closer to body.[hold breath or shallow breathing]
6. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (similar to Bhujangasana) (knees straight and lifted off the ground if possible , toes tucked in) [breathe in]
7. Parvatasana (head between the shoulders, inverted V-shape) [breathe out]
8. Ashva Sanchalanasana (back knee straight and should not touch ground) [breathe in] (Same as step 3)
9. Pada Hastasana [breathe out] (Same as step 2)
10. Ardha Chakrasana [breathe in] (Same as step 1)

Come to **Sthiti** - Tadasana with Namaskara mudra [breathe out and relax]

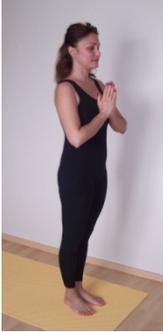
### Note:

Each round of Surya Namaskar is done after the utterance of 'Omkaara' with the appropriate 'Bija Mantra' along with the name of the Sun which corresponds to the chakra in the body in ascending order. Bija Mantras do not have any meaning by themselves. But they are specific sounds believed to have subtle effects on different systems and parts of the body. There are 6 Bija Mantras: Hraam, Hreem, Hroom, Hraim, Hroum, Hrah.

### Following are 12 Mantras for 12 consecutive Surya Namaskar cycles:

1. Om Hraam Mitraya Namah	7. Om Hraam Hiranyagharbhaya Namah
2. Om Hreem Ravaye Namah	8. Om Hreem Marichaye Namah
3. Om Hroom Suryaya Namah	9. Om Hroom Adityaaya Namah
4. Om Hraim Bhaanave Namah	10. Om Hraim Savitre Namah
5. Om Hroum Khagaya Namah	11. Om Hroum Arkaaya Namah
6. Om Hrah Pusne Namah	12. Om Hrah Bhaaskaraya Namah

## Step By Step Directions for Surya Namaskar



**Sthiti:** Tadasana

**Practice:**

- Stand erect with legs together (bring heels together and toes together if possible)
- Bring the palms together to namaskara mudra.



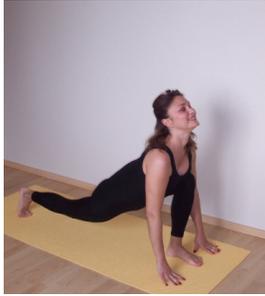
Step 1: Ardha Chakrasana

- While **inhaling**, raise your arms above your head and stretch your body backwards (it is OK to have your palms together in this position)



Step 2: Pada Hastasana

- While **exhaling**, bend your body forward. Try to touch your forehead to the knees.
- Keep the palms on the floor on either side of the feet (Do not change the position of the palms on the ground until Step 10)
- Do not bend your knees.



### Step 3: Ashva Sanchalanasana

- While **inhaling** take the right foot back as far as possible keeping your palms on the ground.
- Push the buttocks forward and downward so that the left leg is perpendicular to the ground, left thigh touching the chest, lower the spine, arch the chest up and look up.



### Step 4: Chaturanga Dandasana

- While **exhaling** take the left leg also back, resting only on palms and toes. Keep the body straight from head to toes inclined to the ground at about 30°.
- Take care to keep the neck in line with the back.
- Do not move your feet where they are in this step until you bring one leg forward in step 10

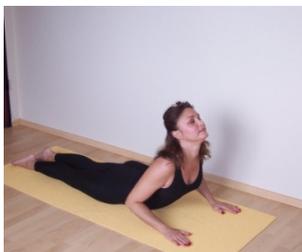


### Step 5: Ashtanga Namaskar

- Without shifting the positions of hands and toes, glide the body forward and **hold the breath** (Bahya kumbhaka) and rest the forehead (or chin), chest, palms, knees and toes on the ground with elbows close to the body and pointing up. Raise the buttocks off the ground.

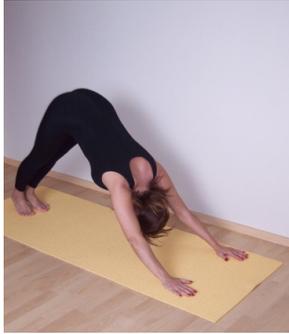
#### Note:

- *Eight points of body are in contact with the ground – hence the name Ashtanga Namaskar (Salutations with eight parts).*
- *As you keep stomach off the floor increase awareness of stomach muscle as in 'Uddiyana Bandha'*



### Step 6: Urdhva Mukha Svanasana

- While **inhaling**, raise the head and trunk making the spine concave upwards without changing the position of the hands and feet.
- Arch the back as far as you can until the elbows are straight. Toes maybe tucked in. Keep the knees off the ground if you can.



#### Step 7: Parvatasana

- While **exhaling**, raise the buttocks, chin to chest, push the head towards knees and try to touch heels to the ground without shifting the position of hands and feet.

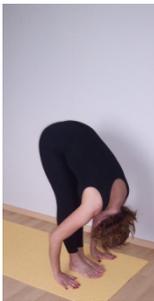
#### Note:

- *As you push your forehead towards knees with full exhalation increase awareness to upper body, stomach muscles, and rectal muscles as you do in 'Mahabandha'; chin to chest, stomach and rectal muscles in full contraction*



#### Step 8: Ashva Sanchalanasana

- While **inhaling** bring the right foot in between the two hands keeping your palms on the ground
- Push the buttocks forward and downward so that the right leg is perpendicular to the ground, right thigh touching the right side of the chest, lower the spine, arch the chest up and look up.



#### Step 9: Pada Hastasana

- While **exhaling** bring the left foot forward next to the right foot and reach down with your upper body to touch the forehead to the knees as in step 2.



#### Step 10: Ardha Chakrasana

- While **inhaling**, raise your arms above your head and stretch your body backwards (it is OK to have your palms together in this position)

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#### Sthiti:

- While **inhaling** return to Sthiti.
- This completes one cycle of Surya Namaskar.



- Repeat one more cycle, alternatively starting with the left leg in position 3 and position 8.

### **Variations:**

1. People should practice forward bending (Pada Hastasana) with caution. They can bend their knees during forward bend.
2. People with hypertension should not hold Pada hastasana pose. They should just flow through into the next pose.

### **Limitations:**

- Any one suffering from hernia, spinal disorders, high blood pressure should practice Surya Namaskar only after consulting a physician
- Women during menstruation, prenatal and postnatal conditions should avoid this practice or practice with caution only after their doctor's conditional approval.

### **Notes:**

- Surya Namaskar should be performed with empty stomach preferably at sunrise and/or sunset facing the sun directly.
- Alternate right and left leg in successive cycles for Step 3. Step 8 can become complementary pose when the leg that was taken back in step 3 is brought forward.
- Surya Namaskar needs to be performed with full attention to breathing, awareness in each position as noted.
- Keep your natural breathing pattern and rhythm; one should not feel out of breath during this practice
- All 10 positions are performed in sequence one after another to complete one cycle.

### **Benefits:**

- Helps loosen the joints and muscles in the body.
- The combination of all asanas performed as cyclic practice has many health benefits such as weight loss, vitalizing the entire body, sharpening the mind and reaching optimal health.
- Surya Namaskar has a very powerful influence on all the systems of the body: nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, etc