

Importance of Vinyasa Yoga

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“Vinyasa means breath linked with movement. It is a conscious flowing movement where each posture is intimately linked with the breath. It focuses the mind on the movement and allows the Yogi to go deeper into the practice.”

Vinyasa Yoga is more dynamic than a Hatha Yoga class which is concentrated more on static poses usually held for a longer period of time. Practicing only static poses does not reveal the incredible potential of asanas to be explored when linked in Vinyasa. When you practice a sequence of asanas you link them with conscious breathing. It is the intention that links the postures with consciousness rather than unconsciousness.”

The importance of the breath in Vinyasa yoga

“Yoga is the maximum amount a practice involving breath because it is involving the body”. [TKV Desikachar ‘The Heart of Yoga’] This statement by the son of Sri Krishnamacharya’s points out the importance of the breath in Vinyasa Yoga. Every movement should be led by the breath as we flow through our practice.

The correct linking of breath and movement is that the basis for the practice. Our mind must come into play to consciously link breath and movement. Finding this conscious link is fundamental to our practice. It is important to use the least number of breaths and movements to enter into, transition and go from one position to another.

Of course we must use the right breath (either inhalation or exhalation) with a specific movement. Generally an expansive or ascending movement, like raising the arms up, would be led and continued with an inhalation. Conversely, a contracting or descending movement, such as lowering the arms down, would be led and continued with an exhalation. It is important to steer into the movement with the breath (either inhalation or exhalation) and continue that breath during that specific movement. The movement should not precede the breath.

During Vinyasa the breath should be flowing in or flowing out. The breath should not be held. If it is held it is usually when one is struggling in a posture and forgets to breathe. Firstly, the breath should be through the nose unless a specific posture (such as ‘Lion Pose’) involves the breath to be expelled from

the mouth. To assist within the flowing of breath we use what's called ‘ujjayi’ or ‘victorious breath’. That is where there's a small restriction of the glottis within the throat which during a breath gives a sound almost like a wave on the beach. Being able to listen to the ujjayi breath causes you to be more conscious of the breath and more likely to continue its flow.

Benefits of Vinyasa yoga

Any sort of Yoga will provide physical benefits including improved balance and adaptability. Vinyasa Yoga additionally will increase your stamina and endurance. This occurs through the dynamic movements that increase the gut rate and develop muscular tonus and strength. Increased muscle strength around joints helps to support the joint under pressure. Improved strength and flexibility reduces the risk of injury, or re-injury. Another benefit is the improvement of immunity and of course a sense of well-being that spreads into your daily life.

The body becomes revitalized and its ability to heal is enhanced by stretching, strengthening and breathing techniques. Increased body heat and energy will loosen muscles also as instigate stronger blood flow carrying oxygen to vital organs. Increased heat in the body leads to sweating which helps rid the body of harmful toxins.

Another benefit of Vinyasa Yoga is that it promotes attentiveness and you do not become easily bored.

If we practice the same asanas over and over again for a long stretch of time, they can easily become mere routine, even if the choice of asanas and breathing exercises is strategically and designed specifically for our condition and goals. Our attention to what we are doing steadily diminishes with this kind of unbroken repetition, and boredom sets in. Staying alert and constantly discovering new forms of awareness are essential features of a correct asana practice. The proper practice of asana requires our mind to be fully focused; this is automatically achieved by arousing interest and attentiveness through new experiences.

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