

Helpful Hints

excerpted from the book *A Teacher's Guide for Beginning Yoga*
by Vijayendra Pratap, Ph.D., D.Y.P.

1. Yogic practices bring appreciable results if done continuously, for a long period, and with respect. However, whatever is done in a proper way, will not be a waste. Of course, regular practice has a more profound effect.

2. Practices with a light stomach lead to feelings of well-being. Therefore, avoid heavy meals for about three hours before practice, and also snacks for about an hour. Moderate food, which is appropriate and conducive to the healthy way of living, is advocated. A pleasant attitude while eating is as important as the food itself.

3. Choose a place for practice that is quiet and well ventilated, free from draft and din. Burn some mild incense. Have some inspiring photographs, pictures, or concepts, which may be helpful and bring to your consciousness again and again what you want to accomplish. These arrangements will create an atmosphere that will be helpful to Yogic practice.

4. Have a nice seat for your practices. The traditional arrangement of the seat for the spiritual aspirant is Kuśa grass, i.e., a grass mat, and above that a tiger, lion, or deer skin covered by a piece of cloth. If you do not feel comfortable with the idea of skin, use a woolen blanket and cover with a washable, clean cloth.



The process, the way you do it, is more important than the final position.

5. Choose a time for practice. You can decide, after some days of practices, which time is best for you. This will condition you for practices and free you from fighting the idea of whether or not to do it.

6. Take a whole bath or shower before you do your practices, or at least wash your face, hands, and feet. You will feel fresh with a feeling of purity. This feeling can be brought about in several ways: water, Mantra, exposure to sun, air, etc.

7. Wear loose or stretchable clothing while you practice so that blood flow, breathing, and movement will be easy and unrestricted.

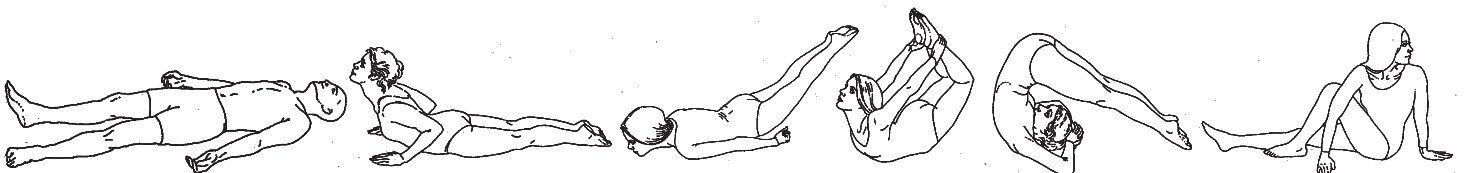
8. Approach Yoga with the spirit of a sportsman, having an attitude that will lead to success and beyond. It is a question of values when you choose something to do.

9. Do not be a perfectionist. Individuals differ in their physical and mental abilities, so avoid comparing yourself with others. This is one of the secrets of happy living.

10. With regard to the practices, do not strain, and whenever you feel the need for rest during practice, relax. The Corpse and Crocodile Poses are good for relaxation.

11. The process, the way you do it, is more important than the final position. It will help you develop the Yogic attitude toward what you do in a calm, secure, contented way.

12. Follow the order of poses in such a way that the poses complement each other, and include all the possible movements of the spine. If you cannot do some practices, work on them slowly, gradually, and patiently. It is your own body — it needs training and not straining.





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13. Pairing physically strenuous exercises with Yogic practices at the same time is not desirable. It is always better to have one in the morning and the other in the evening. As an alternative, the two should be practiced with a break of at least 15-20 minutes between them.

14. Let breathing take care of itself while you are doing Āsanas, or “postures.” When you feel like exhaling, exhale, and when you feel like inhaling, inhale; i.e., breathing should be allowed to proceed as normally as possible. There are, however, other practices where breathing and postures are combined — these need caution.

15. Start and end your practices with an attitude of devotion, with eyes closed, by chanting “Om” three times or so. Or just sit quietly with eyes closed and be aware of your breath.

16. If you fail to do your practices, do not be disheartened. Try again. Persistence is the key to great achievements in life.

17. Of course, there is no substitute for personal help and instruction from a competent teacher. If you really want and need guidance, you will find it.

18. Start today!

*Dr. Vijayendra Pratap will present
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at MEDICAL YOGA 2016.*



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