

## Zen Resort Bali: YOGA



The word "Yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word "yuj" which means "to unite or integrate". Yoga is a 5000 year old system of Hindu philosophy of harmony and balancing the body, mind and soul, thereby enhancing physical, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing.



Yoga comprises of three fundamentals, the external relating to physical health and fitness, the internal to the psychological health and intellect, and the innermost to spirituality and benevolence. All these three aspects are essential to healthy living, happiness, liberation and enlightenment. Yoga is an art and takes into purview the mind, the body and the soul in reaching divinity. The body must be purified and strengthened through physical exercises and discipline. The mind must be cleansed and liberated of all inhibitions and constraints and the soul enlightened.



There are six Hindu vedic philosophies, and among them two relate to yoga – Sankhya yoga and Patanjali yoga. Sankhya yoga focuses on the mystery of and different elements of life and the universe and relates the relationships and relevance of previous life, birth and after death to current life conditions and aspirations. The individual human spirit (Paramatma) can secure eternal liberation (Moksa) through Karma yoga (self-less work), Bhakti yoga (spiritual devotion), Jnana yoga (ways of wisdom) and Raja yoga (self control). Patanjali yoga comprises the practical means and actions such as Hatha yoga (exercise postures), Pranayama (control of breathing) and Dhyana yoga (meditation). Practicing yoga revives and rejuvenates damaged tissues and cells.



Yoga practices help deal with emotions, sensitivities, desires, achievements and failures in our lives. Through Yoga we learn to develop a greater awareness of our physical and psychological blocks that often keep us from realizing our full potential. Yoga enables us to better manage our feelings, reactions and responses to situations we are confronted with. The regular practice of yoga results in benefits, including youthful face & figure, gracious posture & carriage, clear complexion, improved blood circulation & all-round wellbeing.



During the last decade, Swami Maharaj Ram Dev in India has simplified and popularized a range of yoga exercises together with pranayama techniques and meditation that are easy to do and highly beneficial in not only achieving and sustaining good health but also curing many ailments and diseases. The teachings of Swami Ram Dev have influenced many people, and in fact tens of millions of people join his daily television exposition of yoga, pranayama and meditation across India. Our Yoga masters from Kerala have attended workshops by Swami Ram Dev and these practices and technique are at the core of our morning Zen Resort yoga classes comprising,

- Light exercises done in sitting position Dandasan and in sequence to relax and strengthen the toes, feet, ankles and legs, knees and hips, waist and stomach, back, chest and heart, fingers and hand, shoulder and neck, elbow and the eyes.
- Surya Namaskar, a series of twelve graceful movements done sequentially such that energy stretches through the spinal cord simulating blood circulation. A regular practice of this exercise improves the digestive system and heart functioning, flushes impurities from the skin and is beneficial to the endocrine system thus aiding metabolism of the body.
- Pranayama and Meditation: A series of eleven breathing, relaxation and consciousness exercises that is critical to physical, emotional and spiritual health.

- Mudras are a series of eleven finger exercises done in sitting or standing position. Our five fingers denote the five elements that compromise everything in the world, thumb the fire, index finger the air, middle finger the space, ring finger the earth and the little finger the water. The exercises bring about a balance of the five elements in our body thereby improving the functioning of all the internal organs and body physical as well as enhancing psychological and spiritual wellbeing.
- Asanas are posture exercises that involve bending, twisting, sitting, standing, inverting and supine position; they are highly beneficial in terms of physical, psychological and physiological wellbeing. Depending on an individual's level of fitness and physical flexibility, specific asanas will be recommended and practiced.



In addition to the above, individual yoga exercise classes can also be designed in cases related to specific health conditions such as digestion and stomach problems, sugar level and diabetes, weight problems and obesity, backache and spinal problems, circulation and blood pressure, anxiety and stress etc