Surya Namaskar

Compiled by: Trisha Lamb

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International Association of Yoga Therapists
P.O. Box 2513 • Prescott • AZ 86302 • Phone: 928-541-0004
E-mail: mail@iayt.org • URL: www.iayt.org

The contents of this bibliography do not provide medical advice and should not be so interpreted. Before beginning any exercise program, see your physician for clearance.
“Light is a central theme in yoga. Yoga practice, in fact, is a journey towards the source of all light—a state termed as enlightenment or illumination.

“However, honouring the light or sun is not confined to only yoga. The ancient Egyptians worshipped Ra, the Sun god. Jewish mysticism has Zohar, a sacred text which means, ‘radiance.’

“In Western tradition, Creation itself is said to have started with the words, ‘Let there be light.’ Modern science too says that the universe began with a fireball that grew from a compressed light smaller than a pinprick to an expanding fire over 750,000 years ago.

“Thus light is inferred as a vital factor without which life is not possible.

“Now, how does one reflect on this primordial energy in yoga?

“Many techniques exist, of which the most simple and efficient is the Surya Namaskara, or sun salutations. Here, the symbolism of the sun serves as a source of all energy within us.”

—Manoj Kaimal

“Yoga technique: Salutations to the sun,”

_The Star_, March 26, 2005


“Try incorporating the Utkatsana series, the Tiptoe Balance, Virabhadrasana II, and Trikonasana into Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation). This flow sequence, developed by Karley York, a yoga instructor at Bally Total Fitness in Studio City, California, will slowly build your strength and endurance in each of the included standing postures.”


Contents: The Canticle of Brother Sun, The therapeutic effect of the Sun Salutation, Energy flow during the Sun Salutation, Breathing, Colour and colour breathing, Starting positions, Attitude of mind—necessary or not?, Specific neck and shoulder exercises, Leg/foot exercises on a table or chair, Pelvic and back exercises, Walking with the hands—walking with the feet, The suspended position, The half-suspended position, The full suspended, From the extended position to the undulated position, The Simple Sun Salutation, The Sun Salutation, The Sun Prayer of the Sioux Indians


**Bradley, Carolyn.** Poem to be recited to sun salutation (for children). Available online: http://www.power-yoga.com/kids.html.

Reviews Swami Satchidananda Ma’s tape and booklet on *Surya Namaskar* and gives them a high recommendation.


Burling, Joy E. Suryar namaskar (greet the sun). IAYT holds a copy. (Two pages.)

Cappy, Peggy. *Yoga for the Rest of Us* video. Available from Peggy Cappy’s Yoga Studio, 76 Grove St., Peterborough, NH, tel.: 603-924-9642.

“Much of it is chair yoga with an interesting sun salutation with the chair.”

Centre Européen du Yoga. *Suryanamaskar (le Salut au Soleil)*. Le Raincy, 1970?. [In French.]


“Practice challenging asana and variations breaking down Tripsichore’s technical approach to breathing backbends, inverted work and Tripsichore Sun Salutations with an aim to explaining and exploring how energy flows through the body to create the forms and shapes at the heart of the choreography of Yoga Theatre.”


“Learn the Tripsichore Sun Salutes, understanding the breath used to move into and through challenging and unusual posture sequences.”


Variations to help you explore the dimensions of surya namaskar.


“With the rapid proliferation of power/vinyasa yoga, chaturanga dandasana (four-limbed stick pose) has become almost as popular as decaf latte. While much has been written about this powerful posture, little has been said about the increasingly dynamic nature of the vinyasa sequence that takes the practitioner from uttanasana (standing forward bend) through chaturanga to urdhva mukha shvanasana (upward-facing dog). Performing this dynamic sequence incorrectly, or while guided by ego, can lead to injury and frustration. With a few simple modifications, practitioners at all levels can experience the power of this sequence with safety and confidence.”


Explains the importance of a strong solar plexus; nine postures for building abdominal strength; variations on the sun salutation series for building upper body strength.


“Build strength in your upper arms and discover newfound power and ease in Sun Salutes, arm balances—and everyday life.”


From the publisher: “This [60-page] booklet on the Surya Namaskara is composed of three sections: a brief introduction by Sri K. Pattabhi Jois to the philosophy underlying the spiritual practice of the Surya Namaskara; a reprint of the method and internal benefits of the Surya Namaskara from Pattabhi Jois's book Yoga Mala; and an interview with Pattabhi Jois on the Vedic, Puranic and mantric methods of the Surya Namaskara.”


Contents: Method; Effects; Symbolism and mantras


Nimian, Elaine. A different way to salute the sun. Yoga & Health, Oct 1997, pp. 8-9. (For those with limited mobility.)


From the publisher: A background in exercise physiology and classical dance gives Evamarie Pilipuf a unique edge in movement analysis. As she demonstrates in this 50-minute yoga workout, there’s more to the sun salutation than just calling out the names of the poses. Your instructor should be delivering an exhaustive verbal inventory of each posture to best ensure proper form and reduce the risk of injury. Locking the elbows, rushing through the poses, and dropping the shoulders excessively during the lowered plank are just three of the many common mistakes made in this sequence.


Contents: Introduction, The mind of man, What is a mantra?, A note on Yoga, Surya Namaskars, Pranayama and some yogic asanas, Some aspects of the supernatural,
Raghuram, Sunaad, with assistance from John Campbell. Surya Namaskara: An interview with Sri K. Pattabhi Jois. Namarupa, Winter 2004, pp. 48-51. (There are also accompanying articles on the Sun God, pp. 51-54.)


Rizopoulos, Natasha. Answers the question: “Even though I’ve been practicing diligently, I just can’t seem to get the hang of rolling over my toes in Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-Limbed Staff Pose). Any tips?” Yoga Journal. Article available online: http://www.yogajournal.com/practice/1589_1.cfm.

__________. Answers the question: “After several months of practice, I still use baby steps when I bring each foot out of Down Dog into forward bend in Sun Salute A. What specific muscles could I work on to make this movement more fluid and controlled?” Yoga Journal. Article available online: http://www.yogajournal.com/practice/1584_1.cfm.


“That most familiar of asana sequences, Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) is as rich in symbolic and mythic overtones as it is in physical benefits.”


Provides the standard version, a version that eliminates forward bends (helpful for those with high blood pressure), a Vedic sequence, and a seated version.

The historical background for Surya Namaskar is provided by Swami Shivapremananda, and the spiritual significance is conveyed via quotations from the Upanishads. Different mantric accompaniments are also suggested, including bija mantras.

Other forms of practice described include the use of cakra colors in conjunction with postures and the recital of the Lord’s Prayer in harmony with the 12 movements.

The tape opens with the chanting of the gayatri mantra by Satchidananda Ma.


Contents: The solar tradition, Salute to the sun, Hints and guidelines, Shavasana, Psychic centers, Sun mantras, Surya namaskara for children, Pranâic generator, Psychodynamics, The rhythms of life, Therapeutic principles, Interaction with the vital organs, The endocrine system, Spinal manipulation, Effects on the muscles, Developing the practice, Surya namaskara in a nutshell


A kneeling variation of surya namaskar for those with limited flexibility.


Summary: The present study was undertaken to observe the energy cost and different cardiorespiratory changes during the practice of sūrya-namaskara. Twenty-one male volunteers from the Indian Army practiced selected yogic exercises six days a week for three months. The practice schedule consisted of Hatha-Yoga āsanas (28 min), prânâyâma (10.5 min), and meditation (5 min). Subjects first practiced kapâla-bhâti prânâyâma for 2 min, then yoga-mudrâ for 2 min; after that they rested until oxygen consumption and heart rate (HR) came to resting value. Subjects subsequently performed SN for 3 min 40 sec on average. After three months of training, subjects performed the entire yogic practice schedule in the laboratory, and measurements were taken. Their pulmonary ventilation, carbon dioxide output, oxygen consumption, HR, and other cardiorespiratory parameters were measured during the actual practice of SN. Oxygen consumption was highest in the eighth posture (1.22±0.073 1 min(-1)) and lowest in the first posture (0.35±0.02 1 min(-1)). Total energy cost throughout the practice of SN was 13.91 kcal and at an average of 3.79 kcal/min. During practice, the highest HR was 101±13.5 bpm. As an aerobic exercise SN seems to be ideal, as it involves both static stretching and the slow dynamic component of exercise with optimal stress on the cardiorespiratory system.


Contents: Prologue; Preliminaries; Possible problems; Attitude; Some questions answered; Why so many versions?; Why greet the sun?; Word of caution for complete beginners; The Rishikesh surya namaskar; A very sloppy surya namaskar, or how to miss out on most of the benefits; The wheelchair surya namaskar; Two additional classical
versions; Surya namaskar in a skirt; Surya namaskar in pregnancy; Surya namaskar for back problems; Surya namaskar with mukha bhastrika; Virya surya namaskar; An athletic Iyengar-type surya namaskar; A surya namaskar from the Vivekananda Kendra; Surya namaskar with sunburst breaths; Swami Narayananda’s surya namaskar; A yang surya namaskar; A yin surya namaskar; Astanga vinyasa surya namaskar “A”; The Egyptian surya namaskar; The Japanese surya namaskar; The Tibetan surya namaskar (“Onde du Vajra,” or “Wave of Lightning”); The Rajah of Aundh’s 10 point surya namaskar; The Vedic surya namaskar; What next?; Savasana; Meditation; The benefits of surya namaskar; The precepts of Yoga; Mantra—the power of sound; The breath of life; The history of the “salutation to the sun”; Going deeper [incorporating the chakras]; Epilogue; Glossary

**Sun postures.** Available online: http://www.yogamedicine.com/sun.htm.

**Surya namaskar for an amputee.** Photos available online: http://www.yogapeace.com/sun_salutations1.htm.

**Voelker, Lakshmi.** *Chair Yoga: The Sitting Mountain Series* audiocassette and tutorial booklet. Lakshmi Voelker Enterprises, 1999. URL: http://www.yogalakshmi.com/index.html. (Two 15-minute and one 30-minute classes; includes a seated sun salutation series.)

