



# Yogi Ashokananda

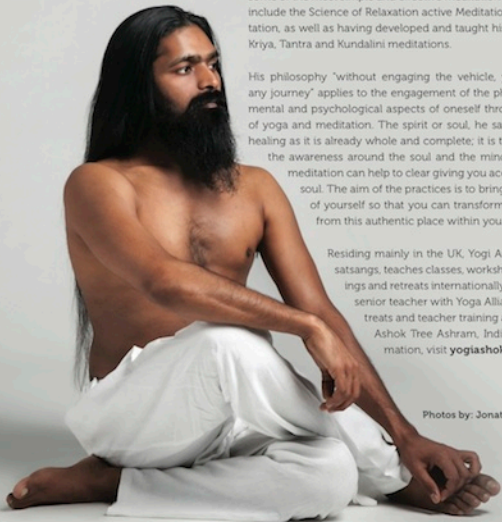
Yogi Ashokananda was raised in India and has been practising yoga since early childhood when his grandfather was his first teacher. Over many years he has developed his teaching, experience and education of yoga and meditation under some of the great remote, Indian masters as well as having taught the teachings of the Bihar School of Yoga at the Sivananda Ashram and the Shri Ved Niketan Ashram. He is also a Reiki Master.

He is the founder of Himalayan Hatha Yoga and Prana Kriya Yoga, practices which reflect his strong respect for yoga as a complete holistic system in itself and which are based on ancient, traditional principles. With a vast experience of meditation, Yogi has established some of the most simple and effective meditation techniques. These include the Science of Relaxation active Meditation and Atma Meditation, as well as having developed and taught his own practices of Kriya, Tantra and Kundalini meditations.

His philosophy "without engaging the vehicle, you cannot make any journey" applies to the engagement of the physical, emotional, mental and psychological aspects of oneself through the practices of yoga and meditation. The spirit or soul, he says, does not need healing as it is already whole and complete; it is the consciousness, the awareness around the soul and the mind which yoga and meditation can help to clear giving you access to the spirit or soul. The aim of the practices is to bring you to the centre of yourself so that you can transform you and your life from this authentic place within you.

Residing mainly in the UK, Yogi Ashokananda holds satsangs, teaches classes, workshops, teacher trainings and retreats internationally. He is a registered senior teacher with Yoga Alliance UK. Yearly retreats and teacher training are also run at The Ashok Tree Ashram, India. For more information, visit [yogiashokananda.com](http://yogiashokananda.com)

Photos by: Jonathan Perugia





# DOLASANA

## PENDULUM POSE



## HOW TO PERFORM

Stand upright with the feet about one metre apart, both feet parallel to each other. Feel a sense of gravity from the groin, along the inner thighs down to the insides of the feet. Keep your toes soft. Body weight is even on both feet and also through both hips.

Place your hands on your hips, as you inhale, extend from waist up, expanding the chest and on an exhale, hinge from the waist taking your torso forward from waistline, extending from pubic bone into chest, waist into armpit, lifting your abdomen muscles towards the pubic bone, stretching your glutes away from heels upwards. Allow your torso to hang from waistline keeping your legs straight and take hold of your elbows with opposite hands. Breathe normally.

Release your head allowing your spine to elongate without any crunch in your neck muscles. Keep the awareness at the lower abdomen (swadhisthana chakra). You can stay here for 3-5 minutes. As you come out of the posture, bend your legs from knees, release your hands, hang your arms down and roll the spine up vertebrae by vertebrae, chin into throat, until you are fully upright, then bring your head up.

## VARIATION

On an inhale hold your breath inside and touch your forehead to right knee, then left knee, 5 times to each knee and then exhale releasing breath. This gives the added benefit of massaging the abdomen aiding digestion, and strengthens your respiratory system.

## BENEFITS

Good for hamstrings, extends and enlivens the spine and central nervous system. Good to do when tired, brings sense of freshness.

## MODIFICATION

If it feels uncomfortable in the back of your knees or legs, you can keep a bend in the knees throughout.

## CONTRAINDICATION

Avoid if you have a heart related condition or high blood pressure.



# EK PADA VAKASANA

## ONE LEG CRANE



## HOW TO PERFORM

Stand tall, whole body engaged, both feet together. Find the balance in the right foot and with an inhalation bring the left ankle just above your right knee. As you exhale bend the right knee shifting weight away from the back of your right knee into hips, and lowering your waist down, extending torso and arms forwards away from hips, elongating the spine and sides of waist.

Lower your hands to the floor 12 inches in front of your right foot, chest width apart. Spread the fingers away from each other keeping the strength in the tip of your fingertips and the heel of the palm to bear the body weight.

Lock the top of left foot into top of right arm and rest your left knee into left upper arm, keeping the hips square. Lower the upper body down, bringing the weight forwards to create a lift in the back leg. With an inhalation extend your right leg up and back and lift the chest forward and up.

Breathe normally, stay for 5-8 breaths. With an inhalation release your back leg down to come out of the posture. Bring your feet together and gently roll up to standing. Repeat the same with the other leg.

## BENEFITS

Strengthens chest and lower abdomen, arms and wrists. Gives sense of balance to the mind and body, positively affecting the nervous system.

## MODIFICATION

Instead of extending the back leg straight you can keep the back leg bent and extend the heel towards your buttocks. This will give you more balance.

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

If you have slipped disc, neck, upper back or spinal problems or injuries, or suffer with high blood pressure or heart conditions you should not do this posture.



# KAMAL MAYURASANA

## LOTUS PEACOCK



## HOW TO PERFORM

Sit down in Lotus position, inhaling extend your torso up opening the chest. Take your hands beside your thighs. Press fingertips down and come up onto your knees. Take your palms underneath your chest, spreading all the fingers away from each other, fingertips towards your groins, your little fingers touching each other and hands four fingers apart. As you exhale, bend your arms from elbows, start to draw your elbows together to meet towards your belly button.

Lowering your head down to the floor, rest your chest over your upper arms, inhaling begin lifting your knees off the floor whilst still in Lotus, with the strength of your pelvis and front of your thighs and without strain in your neck muscles. Lift the folded legs high first as much as possible, and then start lowering them down to lift your chest up and head off the floor and extend forwards away from the belly button.

Breathe normally balancing the weight evenly between chest, upper body and legs like a pair of weighing scales. Hold the posture for 6-8 breaths then gently release the knees to the floor. Change the cross of the legs and repeat. If you are trying this posture for the first time please put a cushion under your head on the floor in case you lose your balance.

## BENEFITS

Good for increasing metabolism, and strengthens the chest which helps to eliminate toxins from your blood. Good for digestion as it increases the agni (digestive fire) and massages the internal organs in the lower torso primarily the liver and kidneys. This posture is tridoshic (balances all three doshas). Also can give your skin a good glow!

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

Avoid if you have high blood pressure, heart problems, or abdominal ulcers. Not advisable if you are pregnant or during the recovery period from illness.

# PRANA KRIYA YOGA

This physically energising practice of Prana Kriya yoga has long been highly regarded among many great masters and yogis to hold the key to slowing down the ageing process. Prana is life force and kriya means movement. It differs from usual yoga asanas. By retaining the breath it strengthens the heart muscle and gives you a complete body, mind and breath experience. Keep your eyes open throughout the practice.



## 1 DOHAN KRIYA (CHURNING THE BUTTER)

From a seated position, bring both legs straight approximately one metre apart, feet flexed, thighs rolled out to in, extend your torso upwards feeling the gravity through your sitting bones, lower abdomen engaged.

Outstretch your arms in front of you at shoulder height with a light fist. With an inhalation draw right elbow back, left arm forwards and on an exhalation pull left elbow back extending right arm forward.

Most of the force in the practice is with the backwards pull of the arm, not with a forward force, it is not a karate punch.

This opens the chest, heart chakra and creates a gentle twist in the abdomen. Repeat for 10 breaths on the right then with the left.

## 2 KASHTHA TAKSHANA KRIYA (CHOPPING WOOD)

Interlock your fingers in front of you, pressing the palms together and maintain this position throughout the practice. With a sudden, strong and active inhalation extend your arms up to open your chest looking into eyebrows, creating a small arch in the back.

Engage lower abdomen, retain your breath and position for the count of 4.

On an active exhalation bring the arms down close to your body, gazing at tip of nose. Repeat 10 times.







### 3 NRATYA KRIYA (DANCER)

Stand engaged, feet together, arms extended sideways away from shoulders to open your chest and engage your lower abdomen.

Inhaling jump up, landing on balls of feet, heels touching, turning your palms up. Legs bent, knees extending sideways away from groins, stretching the tailbone towards the floor. Hold the breath with the posture.

Exhaling sit on heels, elbows resting on knees, interlock fingers hold for count of 4, then inhaling come up and repeat 5 times.



### 4 SARVANGA KRIYA (WHOLE BODY)

Stand erect and feet 1 metre apart arms extended up beside your ears. Feel the lift in torso and engage lower abdomen, gently arch back with tight buttocks, with clenched fists, press the left wrist against right wrist.

Inhaling extend torso forwards away from left waist down to right foot, circle to left foot, exhaling come up arch back with outer retention of breath. Repeat 5 times, then change the wrist taking right wrist in front of left, inhaling down towards left foot and repeat 5 times.

