**YOGA** is an ancient discipline that comes from India. It means union of body, mind and soul. It is a path that leads to enlightenment and self-realization. It teaches how to become whole and perfect (conscious and aware). Life is a journey and through practicing yoga one can be sure he/she is on the right path to enlightenment - illumination of the body, mind and soul.

Lead us from darkness into light,

Lead us from unreality to reality,

Lead us from mortality into ETERNAL LIFE.

**To be simple and natural is yoga's greatest virtues.**

We are what we think. ~ Buddha

High Thinking - Low Living ~ Swami Sivananda

**Benefits of yoga:**

* It brings body, mind and soul into balance, bliss and harmony
* It helps release stress and tension from everyday life, work, family matters
* It makes you fit, healthy, happy, and strong
* It gives you confidence and self-esteem
* It brings peace and joy to the mind and soul

**Hatha-Yoga**

The main focus is on yoga postures (asanas), the physical part of yoga practice, accompanied with the healing art of breath (pranayama) and concentration. Its aim is to make the physical body very strong. The result of hatha-yoga is to make men live long. How to stay healthy and live 100 years is the main idea of hatha-yoga.

**HATHA and RAJA-YOGA** are divided into **8 steps:**

**Yama or Social Ethics**

- no harm, truthfulness, no stealing, moderation, and modesty

**Niyama or Personal Principles**

- cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study, and self-surrender to God

**Asana or Postures**

- yoga postures

**Pranayama or Control of the Breath**

- control of the breath, prana, which is the source of all energy and the vital force in every being

**Pratyahara or Inward Focus**

- restraint of the senses from their objects

**Dharana or Concentration**

- fixing the mind on a spot

**Dhyana** or **Meditation**

**Samadhi** or **Super Conscious Experience - NIRVANA**

**Raja-Yoga - The Science of the Mind**

Its philosophy: **Believe nothing until you find it out for yourself.**

It is contemplative yoga; it requires steady practice. It teaches how to **turn inward** and realize the true nature of the Higher Self. It stressed the importance of observation of the mind that leads to the discovery of the innermost secrets of the Inner SELF - Christed SELF. It is based upon our inborn desire to know the TRUTH. As Ascended Master Yeshua said: **“Only the truth will set you free.”** Raja-yoga teaches that knowledge is power and all knowledge is based on direct experience. And it is this inner knowing that will liberate us from the darkness and all the illusion.

Vegetarian, organic diet with variety of spices is very important. Healthy food is medicine not only for the body but also for the mind. As the saying goes: **We are what we eat**.

Yoga postures and simple breathing techniques plus meditation.

**Postures (asanas):**

Mountain, Half Moon, Standing Back Ben, Standing Forward Bend, Triangle, Warrior, Dancer, Boat, Child, Locust, Cobra, Downward Dog, Symbol of Yoga, Bound Angle, Head to Knee, Seated Spinal Twist, Posterior Stretch, Bridge, Knee to Chest, Half Shoulderstand, Fish, Supine Twist

(drawings of each asana)

Relaxation technique: Corpse (Shavasana)

Simple Breathing and Praying Techniques

We start with chanting OM to center, calm the mind, and the nervous system. Tibetan bowl. After being grounded, we start with warm-ups for 5 – 10 minutes. Then we can focus on simple yoga postures. The key is to not only learn the asanas but also how to be in the moment, be present and not let a busy mind drift you away. Peaceful and deep breathing is very important as well as concentration.

**Sun Salutation**

People have to be reminded to be on time for each yoga class, and it is not recommended to eat or smoke an hour before the class. It is advisable to bring a small bottle of water. People wear comfortable clothing, yoga wear, yoga pants, yoga tops or tanks; they can be barefoot or have socks. They bring their towels.

**Tantric Yoga**

Tantra – that is the energy work on the spiritual path. It is a scripture that contains information on the innermost secrets of the Cosmos and the Universe. It offers techniques, teachings and spiritual practices to obtain inner wisdom. It includes **mantras, rituals, visualization, pranayama, and meditation.**

Tantra is part of Ayurveda, the traditional medicine of India. It is a rather ascetic and dangerous path in spiritual practices. It turns breathing, eating, and sleeping into rituals and sacred practices.

Tantra is the glorification of the cosmic power that is behind ordinary sexuality. It transmutes sexual energy, which is the core of our existence. Tantra sees the **body as a mystical symbol**, as an instrument of experience, but not our true identity.

It encourages **self-discipline** and **detachment** **from the external world**. Through tantric yoga, limitations are transcended into inner freedom and eternal happiness. Tantra also teaches that emotions are limited cosmic energies due to our attachments and dependencies to the physical world. It stresses **the importance of letting go of the ego**.

Tantra gives **reverence to the Feminine Cosmic Energy**, which represents the feminine qualities of receptivity, loving kindness, and compassion. The Goddess is the beauty in Nature, the meadows, the mountains, the ocean, the sky, the flowers, and the forests. The Goddess delights Herself not only in sexual beauty but She also wants us to recognize our ultimate beauty in our minds and within our hearts.