

# Yoga for Healthy Digestion

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## Vocabulary Words

**Yoga-** Means "Union" the object being to unite body and breath, mind and body. Yoga is an ancient practice from India which includes yoga postures (asanas) as well as meditation, and breathing.

**Ayurveda-** Known as the science of "light" or "life" and Indian classical medicine system in place for over 3,000 years. Ayurveda is based on the 5 main elements (water, earth, fire, air, and gas) how they combine in our body to create our own unique constitution/character (dosha) and how our body constitution interacts with the external environment (weather, seasons, geographic location). Balance is created by adjusting food, exercise and lifestyle to account for individual constitution and external environment.

More Information: <http://doshaquiz.chopra.com>

**Agni-** known in Yoga and Ayurveda as the "digestive fire" can also think of it as metabolic action-- the transformation process from ingested food to energy the body can use. Strong digestive fire = better digestion, assimilation, elimination. Low digestive fire = metabolic disorders, weight gain, constipation.

**Ama-** "waste" or "toxins" created from undigested or partially digested food. Low agni = potential for high ama. Certain foods are more ama prompting than others. By maintaining a good diet, adequate physical activity, and increasing digestive fire ama can be avoided and eliminated from the body.

More Information on Agni and Ama: <http://www.chopra.com/agni-ojas-ama>

**Samana Vayu-** In Yoga and Ayurveda the channels through which energy moves in the body are called the "prana vayus" there are six of them but for the purpose of this information we will discuss one "samana vayu" is the circulating energy in the abdomen response for moving food through the digestive tract and supporting the transformation or "agni,"

More information on Samana Vayu and yoga poses to stimulate it:

<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/the-5-prana-vayus-in-yoga-samana>

**Simple Morning Yoga Practice**  
**to stimulate digestion, elimination and detoxification**

start seated center, take a few breaths stretch spine long  
lift arms up overhead  
fold forward at the hips hands to floor head down stretch the lower back  
simple twist to the right (left hand on right knee right hand behind you look over shoulder, twist from the belly 5 breaths)  
simple twist to the left (5 breaths)  
switch cross of the legs (other shin in front)  
spinal flexors (inhale rock forward, exhale round the spine x10)  
interlace fingers reach arms overhead lean right inhale exhale, lean left inhale exhale repeat  
fold forward at the hips hands to floor head down stretch the lower back

come to tabletop (hands under shoulders, knees under hips)  
cat cow (gently arch spine inhale, round exhale x10)  
child's pose (sit bottom back to heels, forehead to floor relax elbows)  
come back to hands and knees round the spine and lift the hips up and back to downward dog  
hold downward dog for five breaths lift the hips high (body like a triangle) stretch the legs back and press into the hands to firm the arms (try and roll the shoulders away from each other to free space in the neck)

walk feet to hands- inhale fingers to floor or shins flat back long spine  
exhale forward fold  
inhale arms out chest light fly up to standing  
exhale hands to heart center

## **Sun Salutations**

**2-5x depending on how you feel and how much heat you want to build in your body**

Inhale reach hands up to the sky  
exhale arms wide fold forward at the hips  
inhale fingers to shins to floor long spine  
exhale fold  
step back to plank top of a pushup  
lower (knees to floor or straight legs) to stomach  
feet, legs, hips heavy-- hands under shoulders lift chest off the floor 5 inches (Cobra pose) lower  
Inhale cobra, exhale lower (x3)  
Inhale hands and knees exhale Downward facing dog  
walk feet to hands inhale flat back long spine  
exhale fold  
inhale stand up arms circle up and palms touch  
exhale hands to heart

### **After your sun salutations**

drop knees to the floor right foot between hands (proposal pose)  
reach arms up, hands to prayer at the heart twist to the right (left elbow over right knee)  
straighten back leg for more challenge hold the twist for 5 breaths.  
Place left hand to the floor reach right arm up (open twist)  
step back down dog (vinyasa or take a break)  
left foot between hands (proposal pose)  
arms overhead, hands to prayer, twist left (right elbow hooks over left knee) hold 5 breaths  
straighten back leg for more challenge  
place right hand down left hand up for open twist  
hands to the floor- down dog, vinyasa or child's pose

come to standing at the top of your mat  
inhale arms up, sit hips back Chair Pose  
hands to prayer twist right (sit low)  
arms up center, hands to heart, twist left (sit low!)  
back to center Chair Pose 3 breaths  
Straighten the legs and fold forward

### **Down Dog**

hands and knees  
lower to floor

Sphinx pose- elbows under shoulders, forearms and hands to the floor press down into the floor  
to lift up into the chest pull your shoulder blades towards each other on your back breathe (5  
breaths)

Yogi's choice either come up and down from sphinx 3x or  
Locust Pose- on your belly float legs and arms up off the floor (arms over head or by your hips)  
hold 3 breaths lower-- repeat 3x (either locus or sphinx)

child's pose-- stretch your lower back breathe (always)

## **Ayurvedic Abdominal Series**

1. knees bent feet flat right knee in, straighten leg heel to ceiling, lower towards the floor. Inhale  
knee in, leg straight, exhale lower leg out in front of you (10x) switch to the left side. Then do  
both legs (knees in, legs straight lower towards floor on exhale, inhale knees in legs straight,  
exhale lower towards the floor x 10)

2. Stir the Soup- Start seated legs straight and open wide. Arms straight out in front of you hands clasped together stir with straight arms to the right (inhale circle from left foot towards right, exhale round the spine rock back arms stay straight!) Circle right 10x then switch left 10x

3. Rowing- Legs together and straight feet flexed inhale arms up overhead exhale fold forward and "row" arms back towards chest on an exhale x10 the reverse reach forward towards feet on an inhale and exhale arms up and then pull down towards your chest x10

4. Kali Chops or Wood Chops- squat down or kneel depending on knee and ankle flexibility, reach arms overhead palms clasped and chop down on an imaginary log of wood x10 as you exhale pull the navel in as you chop your hands down.

SAVASANA (lie on the floor inhale exhale relax your skin, inhale exhale relax your muscles, inhale exhale relax your bones, stay for 3 minutes relaxing, breathing, charging your body)

### **Breath Work and Meditation**

1. Breath of fire- forced exhalation using the navel to expel the breath almost like an automatic inhale just focus on exhale. To start take a deep breath in, exhale half way and pump navel 10x (10 forced exhales) on the 10th breath exhale completely pull belly in when empty. Inhale deeply (3 normal breaths) repeat 10 pumps followed by 3 deep breaths (up to 5 rounds).

2. Cooling Breath- inhale through rolled tongue or pursed lips (like a straw) feel the cool breath come in, exhale through the nose sending the cool breath up towards the head (think about cooling off a "hot head") repeat for 1-3 minutes

3. Meditation- releasing all control of the breath sit in any comfortable position or lay on your back. Relax your body but try and hold the spine straight breathe normally but fully. Sit for 2-10 minutes focusing on deepening the breath, relaxing the body, and most importantly calming the mind. Think for now there is nothing to do but just be. No to-do list, or worries, just allow your mind to float freely, no judgement on where it goes, observe your mind, feel your breath, inhabit your body. In other words come home to yourself. Try and center, anchor, get grounded and think of fueling yourself up for your day. When you feel you have come to completion with your seated practice fold your hands at your heart and bow your head to your light, your wisdom, your incredible body and give thanks for all that you have!

ENJOY Yogis! Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Be Well,  
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