



# Advanced Yoga Practices

## Easy Lessons for Ecstatic Living

### Volume 2

More Original Internet Lessons with Additions by the Author

Yogani

# **Advanced Yoga Practices**

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### **Volume 2**

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This is for you who seek the truth within.  
The journey continues...



## Introduction

Since the first Advanced Yoga Practices (AYP) “Easy Lessons” book came out in late 2004, six years have passed, and thousands of practitioners have availed themselves of the open source lessons covering this baseline system of practices that is compatible with the modern lifestyle. Their evolving experiences, and the need for additional practices, led to many more online lessons, and finally to this second volume. This is a continuation of the lessons in the first book, beginning with Main Lesson 239 and Tantra Lesson T37.

It should be emphasized that Volume 2 does not stand alone. The first volume provides the core practices of AYP, and this second volume carries on from where the first volume leaves off. Here you will find enhancements and refinements for many of the practices provided in the first volume, and many new practices that are not covered in the first volume. The new practices include additional applications of samyama, yogic diet, shatkarmas, amaroli, self-inquiry (advaita/non-duality), bhakti, karma yoga, enhanced asanas, self-directed structuring of effective and safe practice routines, and many other measures for enhancing and refining the “cause and effect” of the process of human spiritual transformation. All of these additional lessons have evolved in direct support of the many practitioners around the world whose experiences have continued to advance over the years.

To facilitate worldwide communication among practitioners, the online AYP Support Forums were launched in 2005, and these have been instrumental for providing an open discussion on practices and experiences at all levels of application, from beginning to advanced. As the community of practitioners has advanced, so too have the lessons. As in the first book, this volume relies on actual Q&As on all aspects of practice, making this as much a chronicle of the paths of many as it is an instruction manual for individual practitioners. In supporting a wide cross-section of practitioners, many variations in the responses of individuals to the practices have been taken into account. This is an “experience-based” approach. With both volumes in hand, the serious self-directed practitioner will have sufficient information to complete the task at hand, which is the merging (union) of the inner and outer realities of life – the very definition of yoga.

The primary prerequisite for using these teachings is to have a human nervous system, which is the doorway between inner and outer life. That, and a sincere desire to do what is necessary to undergo the journey. The practices of yoga promote the opening of the doorway, our nervous system. In the first volume, detailed instructions are provided for yoga practices such as deep meditation, spinal breathing pranayama, samyama, asanas, mudras, and bandhas, all in a compact daily practice that can be maintained amidst the hustle and bustle of ordinary life. The results are found to be practical in ordinary life – more peace, creativity, energy and, ultimately, an endless flow of ecstatic bliss and outpouring of divine love. As time in daily practices accumulates, we find ourselves moving through life as an expression of stillness in action, serving the needs that arise, wherever we happen to be. Over time, the needs of others become our needs, and we spontaneously “do unto others as we would have others do unto us.” It is the rise of *Oneness*, which is living the joy of unity in everyday life.

As with the first volume, this second volume is about cultivating practical results in our daily life, and not so much about theory. It is about practices, and about furthering our spiritual evolution in the most efficient ways possible. There is no doubt that, over time, the quality of our life can be dramatically transformed by doing yoga practices. We become filled with lasting inner peace and

happiness. We come to know that enlightenment is real, and the ultimate destination of every human being. Self-directed spiritual practice provides verification of the great scriptures of the world. In time, we find the wisdom of the ages mirrored within ourselves, and this is all the proof we need. The source is within us.

Volume 2 also looks at the practical aspects of amplifying the effects of practice to benefit society. Group practice, teaching, retreats, research and other ways of inspiring and uplifting the society as a whole are covered. It always gets back to each person and their desire for progress. Therefore, the lessons never wander far from providing the support necessary for the individual practitioner, whether just beginning, or in the later stages of entering the unity experience of enlightenment. This is what the lessons are for. Volume 2 is particularly concerned with the cultivation of end stage development, because this is where many are finding themselves after years of daily practice.

Simplicity and effectiveness have continued to be primary objectives in the AYP lessons. For far too long, spiritual practice has been an arcane field, reserved for the few who have had the drive to penetrate the many barriers to entry. The goal in AYP has been to remove those barriers. In doing so with these simple yet powerful teachings, it has been found that many have sufficient desire and the ability to sustain a daily practice. In removing the man-made obstructions, we have found the inner barriers falling everywhere. As individual practitioners open, so too does the society as a whole. The journey of the individual is also the journey of the society. As we say in the lessons, “The *One* is the many and the many are the *One*.”

As always, the AYP lessons can be used as a stand-alone teaching, or to supplement any other path. The practitioner is in charge, which is how it should be in this modern scientific age. AYP is a non-sectarian resource that is open to everyone, while making a claim on no one. Because so many powerful methods of practice are provided and discussed in these lessons, all are encouraged to go at their own safe pace. As in the first volume, much attention in Volume 2 is devoted to developing skills in “self-pacing,” with the aim of assisting every practitioner to become self-sufficient in applying yoga practices for achieving maximum progress with good safety. Each is responsible for their own progress, and for the means applied.

As with the first volume, significant additions to the online lessons are provided in this volume. The additions can be found at the end of many of the lessons, and are indicated by asterisks (\*) in the table of contents and lesson titles. A summary of additions and illustrations is provided after the table of contents. The numbering of the lessons continues to be a little unusual. That is explained on a separate page.

As always, we owe much gratitude to the great spiritual masters and teachers who have researched, exemplified and generously shared the knowledge of spiritual practices with humanity over thousands of years. It is on their shoulders that we continue to stand today as we reach for the heights of ecstatic bliss and outpouring divine love – our destiny as human beings. We also owe our heartfelt thanks to the many yoga practitioners around the world who have stepped forward and contributed to the development of these lessons through their sincere sharing of experiences and questions. Without them, this second volume of the AYP lessons would not have happened.

May you find the AYP lessons to be a useful resource as you travel along your chosen path. Practice wisely, and enjoy!

The guru is in you.



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## Summary of Additions and Illustrations

The following list provides a summary of the additions that have been included in the designated lessons. These are also indicated by asterisks (\*) in the table of contents and in the lesson titles. If you are already familiar with the AYP online lessons, this page identifies what has been added in the book.

- Lesson 239 – Clarifications and Enhancements for Spinal Breathing Pranayama practice.
- Lesson 253 – Edited to cover the influence of Indian Advaita/non-duality teachers in the West.
- Lesson 302 – On conducting research with the Samyama Sutras of Patanjali.
- Lesson 304 – On utilizing Ayurveda dietary measures to aid in balancing kundalini energy.
- Lesson 355 – Pointers on recognizing inner silence and the witness in daily activity.
- Lesson 365 – More on sensitivity to deep meditation, and the role of open systems of practice.
- Lesson 367 – Considering Nadi Shodana (alternate nostril breathing) for over-sensitivity issues.
- Lesson 368 – Additional comments on Solar Centering, and a diagram to aid in practice.
- Lesson 383 – Instructions for an optional Enhanced Asana Routine, with diagrams for 22 postures.
- Lesson 385 – More discussion on building a practice routine, utilizing the AYP Practice Chart.
- Lesson 421 – Discussion on spirit masters and guides.
- Lesson 426 – Mapping the stages of enlightenment, utilizing an Enlightenment Bar Chart.
- Lesson 430 – Discussion on “ripeness” and the realization of non-duality in ordinary daily life.
- Lesson T75 – Edited to include consideration of the effect of hysterectomy on spiritual progress.
- Lesson T76 – The effect of vasectomy and tubal ligation on spiritual progress.

### Additional Resources Section –

- a. An updated Glossary of Sanskrit Terms, including additional terms added in this volume.
- b. A discussion on doing research with Patanjali’s Samyama Sutras from the *Yoga Sutras*, including simplified English versions for 30 sutras.
- c. Instructions on using Ayurveda diet measures and charts for balancing excessive kundalini energy. Can also be helpful for relieving chronic health conditions.

The following lessons have clarifying notes added at the end – 243, 244, 250, 256, 259, 300, 319, 330, 359, 367, 401, 410, T40

### Illustrations and Charts:

- Lesson 239 – Lateral view of the path for tracing the spinal nerve in Spinal Breathing Pranayama
- Lesson 313 – Neti pot usage for Jala Neti (nasal wash)
- Lesson 314 – Enema bag for Basti (colon cleansing)
- Lesson 365 – Meditation practitioner sensitivity distribution “Bell Curves” (three perspectives)
- Lesson 368 – Solar Centering technique diagram
- Lesson 383 – Enhanced Asana Routine diagrams (22 postures)
- Lesson 385 – AYP Practice Chart
- Lesson 426 – Enlightenment Bar Chart
- Additional Resources Section – Ayurveda Diet Charts for balancing Vata, Pitta, and Kapha

## About Those Unused Lesson Numbers

AYP Easy Lessons Volume 2 continues with the unusual numbering scheme that began in the first volume. There are two reasons for this.

First, in the original online forum, the format was not designed for editing of already posted messages. A posting needing correction could be deleted and then re-posted after editing, leaving an unused number in the overall series. Because some editing did occur using this method, there are some unused numbers in the lesson sequence, and they are marked “not used” in the table of contents.

The second reason for unused lesson numbers occurs only in the books. These were online postings pertaining to administrative matters relating only to the Internet lessons, and having no bearing on the actual content of the Advanced Yoga Practices lessons. Those postings have been left out of both of the AYP Easy Lessons volumes, and the numbers are marked “omitted” in the table of contents.

The reason the lessons have not been renumbered without omissions is because it is important to maintain consistency in numbering between the several versions of the lessons. So, Lesson 239 providing clarifications on spinal breathing pranayama will be Lesson 239 no matter which source of the lessons you are looking at. This is true of the actual content in the lessons also. The content is nearly the same in all venues, except that the books include “fine-tuning” of the original lessons, plus substantial new instructional material added (see list on previous page), going beyond what is available in the online lessons.

So the numbering of the lessons is the same in this book as it is on the Advanced Yoga Practices website, in the original online forums, and in the translations of the lessons to other languages. So, while the lesson numbering looks a bit unusual, it is practical. The lesson numbers will always be the same, no matter where you happen to be reading them.

The guru is in you.



## **Disclaimer**

“Each is responsible for his or her own spiritual progress, and for the methods applied. What you do with the information in these lessons is your call.”

This is what is posted in the introduction to the online Advanced Yoga Practices lessons. It applies to this book also. There is no one who can be responsible for the conduct of your yoga practices but you. All efforts have been made to render an accurate presentation and effective integration of the ancient methods of yoga. Additionally, safety measures (the methods of “self-pacing”) are discussed throughout the lessons for the purpose of facilitating good progress while maintaining stability. However, none of the methods in this book are guaranteed. You engage in these practices at your own risk.

The remarkable capabilities for higher functioning inherent in every human being are the touchstone for all the lessons in this book. The lessons are therefore experience-based. The practices discussed herein are intended to be applied in a flexible manner according to observed causes and effects, and managed responsibly by each individual practitioner.

These lessons do not represent the teachings of any other organization, school, or person, and should not be construed as such. They are the author’s best effort to integrate yogic knowledge from a variety of ancient traditions in a scientific manner. To that end, certain traditions and teachers of yoga are sometimes mentioned in the lessons to add perspective. While it is common for modern teachings to claim a connection to one tradition or another, these lessons claim no such connection. The lessons are an integrated approach to yoga, and must stand on their own merit. It is you, the reader, who will decide their value by how they resonate in both theory and practice.



The Main Lessons  
(continued from the first volume)



## Lesson 239\* – Spinal Breathing Pranayama (Enhancements) and Asanas

**Q:** I have read your lessons on Pranayama, and I have some questions. I have long since been practicing a different kind of Pranayama – we inhale deeply and slowly, and at the same time imagine that we are inhaling in from an energy pool of prana, then holding it for some time, then exhaling it slowly, and at the same time imagining that we are letting out all negative emotions, anger, worry, etc. We don't bring the spine into the picture at all. I read from your lesson that after some time we will also be holding the breath, so that part of my doubt is cleared. But my question is concerning the visualization we do as we inhale and exhale. Have you heard about the method of Pranayama I just talked about? If yes how does it compare to your method of Pranayama?

And another question: There are so many physical yoga asana exercises, aren't there? Do your Advanced Yoga Practices cover them all? Or do they cover only meditation, pranayama and a few sitting posture exercises? Maybe it is not necessary to practice them all to move on the spiritual path but they definitely keep the body fit and energetic don't they?

**A:** There are as many varieties of pranayama as there are teachers, it seems. The degree and kinds of visualizations are many. Underneath it all is the “restraint of breath” which is the engine inside that produces the majority of pranayama effects. The visualizations are often given the credit for what the basic restraint of breath (including slow breathing and kumbhaka) produces. Which is not to say visualizations are ineffective. There is no doubt that attention combined with pranayama will move prana. But to what end?

Spinal breathing is in a separate class from other visualization methods during pranayama. It comes from the tradition of kriya yoga, and other ancient sources, and is directly linked with the purification and opening of the sushumna, the main spiritual nerve in us (it is also the third eye on the upper end). Spinal breathing is, in fact, not a visualization once ecstatic conductivity begins to rise in the nervous system. It is the actual blending of rising and descending pranas. This blending is directly promoted with attention and observed as the joining of the shakti and shiva energies within us. So, rather than consciously manipulating impurities and human emotions, spinal breathing is about fostering the pranic (ecstatic) aspects of the process of enlightenment within us, and leaving the rest to that.

Deep meditation as taught in the lessons works in a similar way – going to samadhi straight away and letting that aspect of our nature (inner silence) do the work. Many forms of meditation don't do that, opting instead to micro-manage the contents of the subconscious mind. The latter is not deep yoga, which is found by bringing the mind repeatedly to natural stillness.

Even though spinal breathing, in its essence, is very simple and powerful, it is often embellished by cultures and traditions, sometimes to the point of distraction. There is a lesson on this (#206) that you might find interesting.

One of the best tests of spinal breathing is its known curing influence on kundalini imbalances. I have lost count of how many folks who have come here with kundalini imbalances (some very serious) and had them relieved almost immediately upon beginning spinal breathing. I had that experience myself many years ago, after having worked with many types of pranayama and kumbhaka. I have found that spinal breathing is by far the most advanced pranayama out there,

whether it be the basic version, or variations involving other elements of practice such as yoni mudra kumbhaka, chin pump (with or without kumbhaka), spinal bastrika, etc.

None of this is to say your practice is wrong or that you should change anything. Your experience is your best guide, and you should proceed accordingly. It is always good to keep our eyes open to possibilities that may enhance our results. That is good science.

On asanas, the primary focus in the lessons has been on sitting practices because there has not been much written on the development and integration of sitting practices. We have taken some good steps toward filling in the gaps on that in the lessons. It has really needed to be done. Asanas have not been ignored – only put in perspective in relation to the full range of yoga practices as summarized in Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*. What we are seeking is a balance of all the best methods to achieve maximum progress.

There are thousands of skilled instructors teaching asanas these days, and hundreds of excellent books and tapes on the subject. The subject seems to be well-covered. Even so, people keep asking here about asanas. So, the first AYP Easy Lessons volume includes a basic set of asanas to do before sitting practices to help get people started. This volume includes enhancements to the original “Asana Starter Kit” (see Lesson 383). In AYP, asanas are a warm up for sitting practices. In other systems of practice, asanas may be an end in themselves, even though they represent only one-eighth of the eight limbs of yoga. It is our culture, you know. It is changing, going more and more toward our inner divinity, and bringing it back out into the world. Physical activity is essential for yoga to fulfill its destiny. Asanas help us on the way in before we do our pranayama and deep meditation. When we are back out in the world, a healthy amount of physical activity and useful endeavors in our daily life are important. Both our sitting practices and daily activities in the world are what cultivate a steady condition of ecstatic bliss and divine love. Asanas have a special role to play in this – aiding the nervous system in its daily journey from outer activity inward to inner silence and ecstasy. In time, all of life becomes permeated with these divine qualities we cultivate first as an inner experience...

The guru is in you.

**Addition:** Over the years, many questions have come on how the spinal nerve is to be regarded, how to imagine it, where it is, what it actually is, etc.

AYP provides baseline approaches to practice that remove the “fluff” that is found in many other systems. Much of this is culturally based, with things added on to an original teaching over time, making the teaching more esoteric, more complex, and often less effective. In AYP, we remove as much of the cultural overlay as possible. So what we offer for spinal breathing, beginning in Lesson 41, is pretty simple. And because it is simple, it is very effective. In spiritual matters, the more complex a practice is, the less effective it will be. Some will argue otherwise. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, you know.

So what about this spinal nerve thing? Many people say they have trouble imagining it going up and down with the breath. Our answer to that has been, “Don’t worry about it. Just make sure you end up at the brow at the end of inhalation, and at the root at the end of exhalation. If you are getting stuck somewhere, just pass over that area and continue between root and brow.” It is fine to use a tactile sense (touch or feel) of the spinal nerve more so than a mental image, if that works for

## **Also by the Author**

Yogani is an American spiritual scientist who, for nearly forty years, has been integrating ancient techniques from around the world which cultivate human spiritual transformation. The approach is non-sectarian, and open to all. His books include:

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