



8 Limbs of Yoga



One way to approach yoga is through the 8 limbs described in the Yoga Sutras authored by Patanjali. Each limb provides a way to better connect to oneself and the earth around us. They contain both philosophical and physical practices which can lead a person into a more intentional way of living. In this document we share the limbs in their Sanskrit term (language originating in South Asia).

1 Yamas

Five Moral Restraints: Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truthfulness), Asteya (nonstealing), Brahmacharya (moderation), Aparigraha (generosity).

2 Niyamas

Five Observances: Saucha (purity), Sanotsha (contentment), Tapas (discipline), Swadyaya (self-study), Iswara-Pranidhana (surrender).

3 Asana

Postures: Physical shapes with breath, mind, and spirit to create strength, flexibility, balance, and focus.

4 Pranayama

Mindful Breathing: Expansion of Prana, or life force, vital energy through control of breath.

5 Prathyahara

Turning Inward: Withdrawal of senses to the mind.

6 Dharana

Concentration: Focus and attention.

7 Dhyana

Meditation: Reflection and observation.

8 Samadhi

Union of Self with Object of Meditation: Bliss, enlightenment, spiritual illumination.