

Eight Limbs of Yoga

(Ashtanga Yoga)

1 Yama = Restraints

The yamas are the means to regain balance in life. They include non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, moderation, and non-possessiveness.

2 Niyama = Observances

The niyamas are practices that lead to wisdom and knowledge of the Self. They include purity, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and self-surrender.

3 Asana = Posture

Asana includes both meditation postures, its primary meaning, and the poses used in hatha yoga to build health and self-awareness.

4 Pranayama = Control and Expansion of Energy

The breath is used to relax and steady nerves, improve concentration, and expand energy.

5 Pratyahara = Sense Withdrawal

Through systematic relaxation the senses are naturally calmed and the mind is lead inward.

6 Dharana = Concentration

When the mind rests on its inner object it becomes stable.

7 Dhyana = Meditation

When the effort to concentrate can be relaxed and held steady, the unbroken flow of concentration is called meditation.

8 Samadhi = Self Realization

Finally, the eternal self alone shines in the mind.