

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO YOGA

The word Yoga means union.

Yoga is a “unitive discipline” leading to inner and outer union, harmony, and joy.

Yoga originated in India more than 5000 years ago, beginning as meditation or a way to connect to the divine. There are several yoga paths, some which do not involve postures at all. The physical postures were a later development. What we in the west most often think of as yoga is hatha yoga, the physical yoga. There are many different styles of hatha yoga.

The **WiseWays** style of hatha yoga was designed for the typically stressed and tight western body. WiseWays yoga is for real people with real bodies. We need release and integration from our yoga practice. At WiseWays we teach about, and have a respect for, the natural design of the bodymind. The safest postures are combined with other somatic techniques to evoke vitality, wisdom, and inner peace. Our small class sizes, personalized and leading-edge instruction, and comfortable, supportive environment makes WiseWays a perfect choice for beginners and those seeking more, for and from, their practice.

Benefits of WiseWays Yoga

- awareness
- centering
- stress reduction
- relaxation
- concentration
- integration

improves the following body systems and functions:

- cardio-vascular
- muscle tone
- joints
- flexibility
- respiratory
- organs
- bones
- agility
- immune
- glands
- connective tissue
- digestion
- nerves
- skin
- elimination
- eyes
- hair

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ESSENTIAL BREATHWORK©

Naturally full and complete breathing is essential for our physical, mental and emotional health. At WiseWays the pathway to easy, uninhibited breathing is the **Resting Juncture Meditation**. Through this practice we recover our birthright—a conscious and free breath cycle—for everyday and always.

Key to liberating breathing is **awareness** of what *is*. Do not change, force, or manipulate. *Let go and allow* the body to release and restore itself to its innate healthy functioning. With practice, over time, you will notice the changes.

Meanings and Metaphors

- Inspirations are beginnings with spirit.
- Expirations are completions, letting go of the past.
- The resting juncture is the present.

The resting juncture phase of the breath cycle is a pause between the breaths. It is at the end of each expiration and before the next inspiration. Sometimes the resting juncture is long, sometimes short. You have completed the expiration and you do not yet need more oxygen. It is a space of time when and where there is *no need to do anything*. It is a moment of physiological rest, deeply relaxing. In some cultures this pause is a point of meditation or prayer. Resting-in connects us to greater or deeper aspects of ourselves - an experience of Peace, All That Is, Connection, The Source, Goddess, God, Spirit.

To Practice the Resting Juncture Meditation

Throughout working with the breath and in all your yoga, breathe only through your nose, sealing your mouth with your tongue and lips. Jaw is relaxed.

1. Begin by becoming aware of the movements of your breathing. Our **breath cycle** ebbs and flows--like gentle waves. For several breath cycles simply notice.
 2. Next follow, with your awareness, each **inspiration** from its beginning to its change into the expiration. Do this for three or four inspirations.
 3. Now notice three or four **expirations** from beginning to completion.
 4. At the end the expiration is the **resting juncture**. For several breath cycles find and rest-into this pause, each time it comes around. Let each inspiration be a surprise - allow your inspirations to happen automatically, on their own, no effort.
- Settle into the resting juncture, deeper and deeper, each time it comes around. Release into the calm, peace, and energy of **the pause between the breaths**.

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WISEWAYS™ Yoga Basic Class Format ©

Solid Sitting: elevate and “square” your pelvis; legs in any comfortable position; spine is relaxed and long.

Sessions begin with Names, Theme and Overview to session

- Center/Become Present—Letting Go with **3 Centers Check-In**
- **Self Massage** with optional aromatherapy
- **Connect to your Breath Cycle**--find your Resting Juncture. **Open your Senses.**

BASIC BODY SYSTEMS WARM-UPS

The WiseWays exclusive warm-ups prepares our bodies for the more formal postures. The warm-ups are somewhat free-form to allow for individualization/your body’s wisdom to play through. There are different starting positions—standing, lying and/or sitting--and a variation of sequences that your teacher may lead you through. Below are key points.

- **Creature Stretching**—muscles; contraction and release; like yawning
- **Supple Stretching and Fascial Unwinding**—connective tissue; expansion
Let one direction evolve into the next, keep reaching, stretching and twisting.
- **Joint Release**—range of motion; exploring how each joint in the body moves.
Note the following articulations:
 - Shoulder socket movement is different than shoulder blade movements.
 - Hip sockets are deep in the pelvis.
 - Tailbone/pelvis/sacrum is part of the spine.
 - Head-neck connection is where the skull poises on the top two vertebrae.
- **Pulsing For Organs**—shake, shake, shake

*After warm-ups--***STRETCHING, INQUIRES and/or POSTURES**

At the end of class **SPONGE** is a relaxed, supine position with arms by your sides. Eyes closed. Options: Recline with feet flat and knees up, pigeon toed and knocked kneed for comfort of the lowback or stretch legs out flat. Try a neck roll and/or an eye cover. Sponge may also be done on your side, in a semi-fetal position with bolsters.

Focus for Sponge: **Sensory Awareness Meditation** and **Resting Juncture Meditation**

After the bell Rings: Bring yourself gently out of meditative mode. Roll to your side into a semi-fetal position to pause before slowly **Rolling to Get Up.**

- Solid Sitting to **Sitting Meditation Posture** for a moment to just BE
- **Closure and Bow**

How Often Should I Attend Classes?

The answer to this frequently asked question is individual. It is recommended that everyone do some kind of yoga daily. This can be mini sessions of centering, looseners and/or stretches. Augment this work with at one or more class a week for the refinement, inspiration, and community classes provide. However, if you are one of many whose practice is supported by the classes and find it impractical to work on your own then consider taking three or more classes a week. For everyone: the more you do the better you will feel. The effects are cumulative. Make a commitment. Make it a habit. If you get away from it just bring yourself back to WiseWays and yourSelf.

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